CATECHETICAL PREPARATIONS

PART I

THE DECALOG

By F. W. C. JESSE

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Catechetical Preparations.

PART I.

THE DECALOG.

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Introduction to the Catechism.

(Prefatory Remarks. — The Lutheran catechist must use and work with two books above all others. The one is the Bible. It is the green pasture into which he is to lead the lambs of Christ. It is the treasure-house of God, from which the poor and needy are to be enriched with incorruptible riches. It is the God-given food for the souls of the children of men. It is the only cure for those who have been permeated with the poison of the Serpent's bite. No true catechist will be able or willing to find a substitute for the Bible.

The other book which the Lutheran catechist will self-evidently employ is the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther. For though it cannot, and never has been intended to, supplant the Bible, it is the guide to lead the lambs, the weak, the simple, through the green pastures and the treasure-house of God, lest the confusion of aimless wandering and unsystematic search cause the loss of some of the gifts which God has prepared for them.

Since, then, these two books must be constantly in the employ of the catechist, it is proper that he should discuss them with his pupils with such degree of detail as may be suited for the age and understanding of the children. The relation in which these two books stand to each other would suggest that the Bible be discussed first, and the Catechism afterwards. However, in order to preserve the sequence of Schwan's *Short Exposition of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism*, we shall observe the reverse order. The experienced catechist will find no difficulty in arranging the material otherwise if he so desires.)

THE CATECHISM.

The only perfect child which has ever lived upon earth was Jesus. When He was twelve years old, He improved the opportunity of the visit to Jerusalem at the time of the Easter-festival to go into the Temple, and, seated in the midst of the doctors (teachers of the Word of God), to hear them and to ask them questions (Luke 2, 41—52). And so zealous was He that all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and His answers. You should consider Him your model in this eagerness to learn the Word of God, and pattern after Him.

During our religious instruction we want to learn the Word of God. In order that you may the more readily understand and remember the doctrines of the Bible, we shall use as our text a book which contains the teachings of the Bible in a very short form. This book is the Small Cate-

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chism of Dr. Martin Luther. Before learning what is contained in this book, however, let us first briefly speak about the book itself. Let us, therefore, to-day discuss *the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther.* Qu. 1—3. 6.

I. What Is a Catechism?

The word "to catechize" is taken from the Greek. We find it used a number of times in the New Testament. And there it always means "to instruct in the Word of God." A catechism, therefore, is a book which instructs, or teaches. And hence you are to study your Catechism in order that you may be instructed, or taught. Hence, a catechism is *a book of instruction.*

But the word "catechism" does not imply *any* kind of instruction, or instruction in any kind of knowledge. It was used by the early Christians to describe instruction in the Word of God only. This book, therefore, does not impart secular knowledge, knowledge which is useful only in earthly things. It rather teaches the doctrine which we should learn from the Bible — the doctrine which, if we know and believe it, makes us Christians. Therefore, Luther also, in the Preface of the Small Catechism, calls it "this Catechism or Christian Doctrine."

The Bible is a very large book. A long time and very much study would be required to learn all that it contains. The purpose of the Catechism is to teach the simple Christians as early and as quickly as possible all that they *must* know in order to be saved. Therefore the Catechism does not teach everything that is contained in the Bible. It teaches simply the *chief parts,* the most important parts, of the Christian doctrine, those parts which every one who would be called a Christian, and who would be saved, must know. The Catechism, therefore, is *a book of instruction in the chief parts of the Christian doctrine.*

For this reason it is properly compared to milk. St. Peter (1 Pet. 2, 2) calls the Bible "the sincere milk of the Word." It is called "sincere," *i. e.,* "pure," because it is the Word of God in all its parts and without the addition of human thoughts or human wisdom. And it is called "milk" because it is the proper food for those who have been born again as the children of God. Furthermore, it is called thus because it contains all that the children of God need for their new spiritual lives. But the Catechism is called "milk" in a special sense. For it contains the food for the souls in the simplest form. Little children, "new-born babes," cannot take heavy food. They must have food which is easily

assimilated, and yet contains all those foodstuffs which the body needs. Milk, therefore, is naturally the best and most suitable food for new-born babes. So also the Catechism does not bring the food for the souls in its heaviest form. It is very simple, so that even small children can understand it, and yet contains all that the soul needs, all that man *must* know to be saved. Thus, the First Chief Part of the Catechism teaches us the Law of God. And in studying this, we learn that "we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against" Him "by thought, word, and deed." The Second Chief Part teaches us to know the good and gracious will of God, who, having created us, has pitied us in the misery of our sins, and has given His Son to redeem us with His innocent suffering and death, and who, by the Gospel, offers unto us the salvation which Christ has bought for us, and works in us the faith which accepts His mercy in Christ. The Third Chief Part teaches us to bring all our temporal and spiritual needs before God, coming unto Him "in all boldness and confidence, as dear children unto their dear father." The Fourth Chief Part shows that, already in Baptism, God has begotten us unto Himself, and placed the seal of the sonship of God upon us. The Fifth Chief Part shows how, if after Baptism we have sinned, we may, by confession and absolution, again receive the full assurance of forgiveness and of the grace of God. And the Sixth Chief Part shows how, in the Sacrament of the Altar, we may ever again receive the seal of the forgiveness and be strengthened in our faith by receiving the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine. As an appendix there are added a number of such prayers as a Christian will have daily occasion to use; a "Table of Duties," showing each one how he should walk before God in his own position in life; and the "Christian Questions," which a Christian may use in the proper preparation for his partaking worthily of the Sacrament of the Altar. Qu. 6.

II. History of the Small Catechism.

This book was *written by Dr. Martin Luther.* (The principal events in the life of Luther, especially such as have a bearing upon the work of the Reformation, may here be reviewed, or, if they are not yet familiar to the pupils, a brief sketch of the life of Luther might be given, especially in advanced classes.) In 1527, Luther, at the request of the Elector of Saxony, visited and inspected the churches and the schools of Saxony. The conditions which he found to

exist everywhere are vividly described in the Preface of the Small Catechism. In order to relieve the dire need, Luther wrote two catechisms, the Large Catechism for the pastors, teachers, and the somewhat mature Christians, and the Small Catechism for the instruction of the children and of the simple Christians. Both books have been accepted by the Church as true and correct confessions of the faith of the Church, and have been highly prized at all times. The Small Catechism is the more generally known of the two, since it, above all others, has, beside the Bible, been the chief text-book of doctrinal instruction in the Lutheran Church.

III. Purpose of the Catechism.

The Small Catechism is, as we have heard, a book of instruction in the Word of God. Hence we are to use it, and do use it, wherever the Word of God is to be taught. The purpose of our day-schools and of our Sunday-schools is to teach children the Word of God. Hence we use the Catechism in these schools. Therefore it is to serve as a school-book. But the same doctrine which is contained in the Catechism is also taught and preached in the churches. The book itself is used in the *Christenlehre* (for which the English has no full equivalent). And often Lutheran pastors use it as a guide for a series of sermons, so-called "Catechism-sermons." It is, therefore, also a church-book. Finally, the superscription of each chief part contains these words: "As the head of the family should teach it in all simplicity to his household." Thus it is also to be a family-book, from which the whole household should ever more fully learn the fundamental truths of the Word of God. It is, therefore, a book of instruction for the school, the church, and the home.

Finally, we note one peculiarity of the Small Catechism. We find that it consists of a series of questions and answers. This peculiarity is not necessarily implied in the word "catechism." The word "catechism" simply denotes "instruction in the Christian doctrine." Nor is the Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther arranged thus. But this method was adopted in the Small Catechism because it was to be used especially by the simple Christians, and was, therefore, to be as brief as possible and, at the same time, as clear as possible.

Thus we have seen *that the Small Catechism is a book of instruction for the school, the church, and the home, composed in questions and answers, written by Dr. Martin Luther, and containing the chief parts of the Christian doctrine, i. e., all that a man must know in order to attain to eternal life.*

CONCLUSION. — You, too, have been born anew unto the sonship of God. You are "little children" in a twofold sense. Little children desire milk. So you should desire the sincere milk of the Word as you learn it at the hand of the Small Catechism. — If children receive their milk regularly, they will grow thereby. So may you also partake of the milk of the Word regularly, not only now, but throughout your lives, in order that your spiritual strength may ever increase. — When children do not care for their food, we conclude that they are sick. So, when you do not care for the milk of the Word, this is a sign that your souls are sick. When children are sick, we give them medicine. When your souls are sick, they also must have medicine. However, the medicine of the soul is the Word of God. Therefore, be eager always for the Word of God. But remember especially that you need it most sorely when you have no desire for it. But by its use, may your souls be restored unto life in God here in time, until finally we shall see in undimmed glory what here we have beheld through His Word.

THE BIBLE.

(PREFATORY REMARKS. — The doctrine concerning the verbal, or plenary, inspiration of the Bible has hitherto been preserved unto us in its full purity. For this we owe thanks unto God alone; for it is but another evidence of His unmerited grace. But we must not be lulled into security by the consciousness of the present possession of the truth. Neither must we believe that watchfulness is not required to preserve this treasure for the future. The rising generation especially is exposed to constant assaults on the part of such as deny and even ridicule this doctrine. And the danger from these assaults must be the greater because our children are being thrown into contact with people of this kind in ever greater measure. Therefore the conscientious teacher of religious truth, whether he be pastor, parochial school teacher, or Sunday-school teacher, should devote special care, devotion, and prayer to this lesson in its preparation and its delivery.

In this connection we would take occasion to make a plea for a united effort on the part of all teachers of religious truth in our midst to promote more thorough familiarity of our children and young people with the sacred volume itself. For we have often found, with more advanced classes of our children and with the young people of our Church, a wonderful knowledge of the fundamental truths of our faith and of the Bible-proofs which are the "seats of doctrine" of the various articles and paragraphs. This is worthy of most profound appreciation. However, we have at the same time found a rather surprising lack of familiarity with the outward form and arrangement of the Bible and of its various books. This condition should be remedied wherever it

exists. With this end in view, we would suggest that a little more time be spent in the discussion of the outward form of the Bible, etc. However, we do not believe that this will in itself prove a sufficient remedy. For in doing this, we merely point to the Bible itself. The full and real remedy will rather be found in the regular and systematic use of the sacred volume itself in connection with the Catechism. Again, this use should not be confined to the daily reading of one or more chapters from the Bible in the class; the children should rather be taught to find the various proof-texts in the Bible, and to consider also the connection in which they occur. For this purpose, at least in the more advanced classes, the use of a catechism in which the proof-texts are indicated, but not printed out in full would be very beneficial. True, more time would be required; but this loss of time would find ample recompense in the more intimate knowledge with the volume of the Bible.)

Introduction. — In the previous lesson we have spoken of the Small Catechism. Luther has written this book. But that which it contains and which it teaches us is not the wisdom of Luther. He himself has rather learned it from another book, namely, from the Bible. For the Bible is properly the only fountain and source of all that we, as Christians, believe. Nor shall we, as we study the contents of the Catechism, accept anything as true because Luther has so written it. But we shall always ask, "Where does the Bible teach this?" And only after we shall have found that all that is written in the Catechism is taken from the Bible, shall we feel safe in accepting it and in believing it with all our hearts.

Since, then, the Catechism is taken from the Bible, and since it is to be proved to be true by proof-texts from the Bible, we shall, before proceeding to the study of the Catechism, learn what the Bible is.

I. Outward Form of the Bible.

As we open our Bible, we find that it is not a single book, but that it is a collection of 66 books written by various writers at various times. For this reason it is called the "Bible" (Greek, *biblion* = small book; pl., *biblia*), which means "books."

a. Again, we find that these books are grouped in two parts, or testaments, the first being called the Old Testament, and the second the New Testament. "Testament" means "covenant," or "agreement." The first part of the Bible is called the Old Testament because it contains the books which were written during the time when the old testament, or agreement, was in force; and the New Testa-

ment was called thus because it contains the books which were written during the time in which the new testament, or agreement, was in force.

The old testament, or agreement, was established before Christ had appeared. God established it. He established it with His people. He promised that He would be their God, and that they should be His people. They should be His people for Christ's sake. Christ had not yet come; but God promised that He would send Christ, and that, by His suffering and death, He would win for them the sonship of God.

The new testament, or covenant, was established after the coming of Christ. It also was established by God with His people. Again He promised that He would be their God, and that they should be His people. They should be His people for Christ's sake. Christ had now come, and had suffered and died for them, and by His suffering and death had won for them the sonship of God.

Thus the real difference between the two testaments, or covenants, is this, that the first covenant spoke of Christ as of one who was to come, and the second testament spoke of Christ as of one who had already come. The real difference is one of time, not of the nature of the covenants.

Thus, the books of the Bible are divided into an Old and a New Testament, according to the time when they were written.

b. The Old Testament, our Catechism tells us, was written by men called prophets. A prophet is one who teaches, or preaches, the Word of God. (Deut. 18, 18.) (All the men who wrote books of the Old Testament are called prophets in the wider sense. Prophets in a restricted, or narrower sense: How many? How many Major Prophets? How many Minor Prophets? Here may be discussed also the classification of the books as historical, doctrinal, and prophetical books.)

The New Testament was written by the apostles and evangelists. The word "apostle" means "one who has been sent." The apostles were the men whom Christ sent out to preach the Gospel. (Names of the apostles.) An evangelist is one who has written an evangel, or gospel. There are four evangels, or gospels, in the New Testament. Each of them is a history of the life which Christ lived on earth for our redemption. (Names of the evangelists. Matthew and John were apostles; Mark and Luke were companions of the apostles Peter and Paul, respectively. Luke has also written the Acts of the Apostles, John the three epistles of St. John and the Revelation of St. John. The epistles were letters.

Other epistles were written by Paul, Peter, James, and Jude. — Here may follow a discussion of the classification of the books of the New Testament as historical, doctrinal, and prophetical books.)

Thus, *the Bible is divided into the Old and the New Testament, the former having been written by the prophets, and the latter by the apostles and evangelists.*

II. Origin of the Bible.

a. The Bible is called Holy Writ. "Writ" means "something which has been written." "Scripture" is another word for "Writ." Therefore the Bible is also called the "Scripture." It is called Writ, or Scripture, because it was written. The men by whom it was written were men whom God had chosen for this work, and who are, therefore, called "holy men of God." 2 Pet. 1, 21. We have heard that they were the prophets, apostles, and evangelists.

b. The holy men of God did not write because they felt inclined to write. They rather wrote because the Holy Ghost moved them to write. 2 Pet. 1, 21. The Holy Ghost made them will to write. He was the cause of their writing.

Neither did the Holy Ghost prompt them to write, and then permit them to write what they chose to record. He guided them also in the work of writing. For they "spake," that is, "they uttered the words" (Greek, *elalesan*), "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Thus every word was caused to be written by the Holy Ghost. Therefore we read 2 Tim. 3, 16: "All Scripture is given by . . . God." "All Scripture," that is, all that is written, every word of the Bible, was given by God. As pupils writing dictation receive every word which they write from their teacher, so the holy men of God received every word which they wrote from the Holy Spirit. But they did not receive it by dictation; but "all Scripture is given by inspiration." "Inspiration" means "breathing into." God breathed the words into their minds. He put into their minds what they should write. Thus not only the thoughts, but also the words of the Bible were given by the Holy Ghost. (Hence, to say that the Bible *contains* the Word of God is ambiguous, at the least; the proper statement is: "The Bible *is* the Word of God.")

St. Paul, therefore, says: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual," 1 Cor. 2, 13. He speaks the things "that are freely given to us of God" (v. 12), what God has done for us. These

things may be told in various words. Ministers in their pulpits, teachers, all Christians, often speak of these things in their own words, in words which man's wisdom teaches. But when the apostles speak of them in the Bible, they do not use their own words, words which man's wisdom, their own wisdom, teaches them. But they use words which the Holy Ghost teaches.

Hence, the things about which they speak are given them by the Spirit; for this reason they are called "spiritual things." And the words in which they speak are also given them by the Spirit; therefore they also are called "spiritual things." For this reason the Apostle says: "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual," that is the spiritual things about which we speak, and the spiritual words in which we speak. The word "comparing" is now used to mean "putting two things together to see the likeness or the difference between them"; but here it means simply "putting together." They put together the spiritually given things and the spiritually given words.

Since, then, in the Bible, the holy men tell us what God would have them tell us, and since they tell us this in the words which God wants them to use, we know that every word of the Bible is just as truly the word of God as though God had written it down with His own hand.

c. God speaks to us in the Bible. However, God cannot be mistaken; He knows all things. (Ps. 139, 1—4; John 21, 17.) Much less can He lie. (Num. 23, 19.) This is true when the Bible speaks of things which are very important; for in these God cannot be mistaken, nor can He lie. This is also true when He speaks of apparently small and unimportant things; for in these also God can neither err nor lie. Therefore, every word of the Bible must be absolutely true and reliable. We may trust in it and depend upon its promises in all things, in all conditions, in life and in death.

Thus we see that the Bible "is the Word of God, written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost." Qu. 5.

III. Purpose of the Bible.

a. The purpose for which God has given the Bible is indicated in the words of 2 Tim. 3, 15: "Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." The Bible is to make us wise, teach us wisdom. Not wisdom which is profitable for this life. Such wisdom may and should be taught by human reason, which God has given for that purpose. The Bible teaches us wisdom which God alone can impart. The Scrip-

tures should make us wise "unto salvation," teach us how we may be freed from sin and finally enter heaven — the greatest and most precious knowledge attainable. The Bible, therefore, teaches us also the way unto salvation. It is through "faith which is in Christ Jesus." Christ is our Redeemer, our Savior; whosoever believes in Him is saved. Hence, all that the Bible teaches is intended to lead us to know Christ. He is the very sun and center of the Bible.

b. The Bible is *"able* to make thee wise unto salvation." If it did not contain *all* that one must know in order to go to heaven, it would not be able to make wise unto salvation. But since St. Paul tells us that it is able to do this, we know that it contains all that we need unto salvation. We need no new revelations, new doctrines, traditions, legends, etc. The Bible alone is *sufficient.* — But though the Bible contained all that is necessary, it would still not be able to make us wise unto salvation, if it did not teach all necessary things with such clearness that we could understand its meaning and believe what is necessary unto salvation. But, again, we are told that it is able to make us wise unto salvation. Therefore, we know that it is clear enough for every Christian, even "from a child" (Timothy), to "know" it, to understand enough of it to find the way unto heaven. (Clearness, perspicuity.) Hence, also, Christ commanded all who heard Him to "search the Scriptures" that they might find eternal life therein. John 5, 39. — Furthermore, the Bible would not be able to make us wise unto salvation if it told us what we must know, but did not give us strength to believe it. But now it is able to make us wise unto salvation; it has the power to work faith in us. It is "quick" (living, life-giving) "and powerful" (Heb. 4, 12), "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1, 16), "spirit" and "life" (John 6, 63). — While, on the one hand, the Bible contains all that we need unto salvation, on the other hand, there is nothing written in the Bible which is not given, or not able, to help to teach and to strengthen our souls unto eternal life. For "all Scripture . . . is profitable," etc. If we do not, in every case, see in what way this or that verse of the Bible can be helpful, this is not because it is, in truth, not profitable, but because our understanding is not yet keen enough. But some soul, perhaps at another time we ourselves, will find comfort and strength therein. (Example: Matt. 1, 1—16. Shows that great sinners received forgiveness and were made Christ's ancestors according to the flesh.)

c. If this purpose of the Bible is to be accomplished in us, we must use it diligently. "Search the Scriptures,"

John 5, 39. To search means more than to look into, or to read thoughtlessly and mechanically. It means to study carefully every word. — And what we have learned from it we must accept. Luke 11, 28. Not they are blessed who merely hear, but they who hear *and* keep the Word in believing hearts. — Neither should we postpone the use of the Bible until we are grown. We should use it "from a child," knowing that it will even now be unto us profitable for doctrine, etc., and that thus we shall become "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3, 17.

Thus the Bible is holy in its origin and contents as well as in the purpose which it is to serve. Therefore we call it the *Holy* Bible, the *Holy* Scriptures, *Holy* Writ.

Conclusion. — Thus we have seen that the Bible "is the Word of God, written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by the holy prophets in the Old Testament, and by the apostles and evangelists in the New Testament, to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Qu. 5. Treasure, love, learn, believe it, and be saved by it.

The First Chief Part.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Introduction. — In order to be saved, man must believe that Christ is his Savior. However, no man will be willing to believe that Christ is his Savior unless he has first learned to realize that he is in need of a Savior. He needs a Savior because he is a sinner. In order, then, to see the need of a Savior, he must learn to know his sins. But he can recognize his sins only if he knows the holy will of God. For unless he knows the will of God, he cannot know whether he is in conformity with that will. Therefore, before attempting to teach us, in the Second Chief Part, to accept Christ as our Savior, our Catechism, in the First Chief Part, teaches us to know the holy will of God.

The First Chief Part has this superscription: "The Ten Commandments, as the head of the family," etc. We have already considered the last part of this superscription, and shall, therefore, to-day speak of *the Ten Commandments in general.*

I. What Are the Ten Commandments? Qu. 7.

a. They are the commandments of God. In the written form, in which we have them, they were first given to the children of Israel. In giving them, God used the words: "I am the Lord, thy God." (Ex. 20, 2.) And in Micah 6, 8, He is again called "the Lord" ("What doth the Lord require of thee?") and "thy God" ("to walk humbly with thy God"). — He has the right to command, for He is the Lord; a lord has authority to issue commands. He is also *our* God; He has created us. The Creator has a right to say in what way His creatures should serve Him. We, on our part, are in duty bound to obey Him. For we are His servants; servants must respect their master's will. We are, furthermore, God's creatures. He has created, kept, and provided for, us. This kindness demands obedience as an evidence of gratitude on our part.

b. The Ten Commandments are God's *holy will,* or *Law.* The Lord commands. "These words which I *command* thee this day." Deut. 6, 6. He requires something of us. "What doth the Lord *require* of thee?" Micah 6, 8. What He commands and requires is His will. These commandments, there-

fore, are the expressions of *God's will.* Now, God is holy; He loves that which is good, and hates that which is evil. In the commandments He tells us what He loves and what He hates. Therefore, the commandments express His *holy* will. — The published will of a ruler or governor is called the law. Therefore, the commandments are called also the *Law of God.* And since it is the published law, it is our duty to know it. Ignorance of the law is no excuse for the breaking of the law. On the contrary, not to know the law is in itself an offense against the law. Therefore, it is our duty carefully to learn the Law of God.

c. The *requirements* of the Law are twofold.

The Lord requires us "to do justly, and to love mercy." These words declare, in general, the nature of the *acts* which God requires of us. We should do justly, *act* according to His will; we should love mercy, *act* according to charity toward our neighbor. These things we should *do;* the reverse should be left *undone.* Therefore, in every commandment, God says, "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not." Thus, in the Law, God tells us "what we are to do or not to do."

But the Law judges not only our acts, but our hearts as well. The Lord requires of us "to walk humbly," with a humble heart, a heart which walks "with thy God," which walks *willingly,* step by step, as God directs. God demands such a heart as knows no other will than His good pleasure. Thus, the Law tells us also "how we are to be."

Hence, the Ten Commandments "are the holy will of God, or the Law, wherein God tells us how we are to be, and what we are to do or not to do." Qu. 7.

II. When and How Did God Give This Law? Qu. 8.

a. In the written form in which we now have the Law, it was first given to the children of Israel through Moses upon Mount Sinai. But this was not the first time it was given. Nor was it given to one people only. At the time of St. Paul the Jews had the Law, the Ten Commandments, in writing. But in Rom. 2, 14. 15 St. Paul speaks of the "Gentiles," that is, of all who were not Jews. Of these he says that "they have not the Law," that is, the written Law. Yet they "do by nature the things contained in the Law." There are certain things of which *all* know that they are right, or that they are wrong, before God. And men show that they have such knowledge. For they act outwardly according to this knowledge. They do this "by nature," that is, of their own accord, without learning the will of God from the Bible.

They "are a law unto themselves." "Their conscience also" is "bearing witness." The conscience is not "the voice which God has placed into man's bosom to tell him what is right or wrong"; that is the law written in man's heart. Conscience is rather the monitor, reminding man of his duty to obey the law, and a judge who approves or condemns man's acts according to his knowledge of the law. This conscience bears witness to all men that they are in duty bound to do the works of the law which is known to them. — All this shows that the Law is "written in their hearts," in the hearts of even those who have never heard the Ten Commandments. *In creating man, God wrote the Law into man's heart.* And all the children of Adam have inherited it.

b. Adam and Eve, before the Fall, knew the holy will of God perfectly. They were never in doubt as to what is right or wrong. But we, who live after the Fall, do no longer possess this knowledge of the Law in its perfection. We are often uncertain, and sometimes consider right what is really wrong, and wrong what is really the will of God. This is the case because we are sinful. Sin has darkened the Law in the hearts of men. We still know a little of the Law by nature. But our knowledge is very imperfect.

However, it was the will of God that man should know what is good in His sight. Therefore He gave the Law a second time. He gave it *through Moses upon Mount Sinai, written with His own fingers upon two tables of stone* (Deut. 9, 10; 10, 4) *in the form of ten commandments.* Ex. 19. 20.

If we compare the Ten Commandments as recorded in the Bible (Ex. 19; 20, 2—17) with the text of our Catechism, we find differences between the texts. This is due to three causes.

Some words recorded in the Bible have reference only to events in the history of the Jews, the people to whom the commandments were first given in this form. For this reason the greater part of Ex. 20, 2 is omitted, and the version of Eph. 6, 3 is substituted for Ex. 20, 12b. — Other words are simply an explanation or enlargement of what has been said in other words. For this reason Ex. 20, 4. 5a and Ex. 20, 7b can be omitted without destroying the commandments even in part, thus making the text of the Catechism more brief. — Finally, some words have reference to Jewish ceremonies which are not binding upon Christians in the New Testament. Such is the case with the Sabbath command, Ex. 20, 9—11.

For not all laws upon Mount Sinai are binding upon us.

In that Law three kinds of commandments were included: the moral law, the ceremonial law, and the civil law. The *moral* law is, and has been, obligatory upon all men at all times. Therefore, when God, in each commandment, says, "Thou," he means "me and all other men." Qu. 12. This is the law which was written upon the heart of man in creation, and which is contained in the Ten Commandments as we find them in the Catechism. The *ceremonial law* pertained only to the forms of Jewish worship, which was ended by the coming of Christ. (Sabbath.) The *civil law* governed the secular affairs of the Jewish nation.

We have now seen that, *"in the creation of man, God wrote the Law in man's heart, and afterwards He laid it down in the Ten Commandments, written on two tables, and published it through Moses."* Qu. 8.

III. The Sum of the Commandments. Qu. 9—11.

The commandments were written by God upon two tables of stone. We do not know how many commandments were written upon the first, and how many upon the second table. But we also divide the commandments into two parts, or classes. And because the commandments were originally written upon two tables of stone, we call each part a table. In making the division, we cannot be guided by the division which God made in writing the commandments since we do not know how He divided. We are guided rather by the contents of the commandments.

In Matt. 22, 37—40 Christ tells us that the whole Law hangs on, or is contained in, two commandments. They treat of the love which we owe to God, and of the love which we owe unto man. Accordingly, we count all the commandments which treat of the love toward God as belonging to the First Table; they are the first three. And we number all those treating of the love toward man as belonging to the Second Table; these are the last seven.

The First Table treats of the love toward God. The sum of these commandments is stated by Christ in Matt. 22, 37: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Qu. 9. — The commandments comprised in the Second Table treat of the love toward man. Their sum is given by Christ in Matt. 22, 39: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Qu. 10. — Hence, both tables treat of love. Therefore, *the sum of all the commandments is love.* Love, charity, is the end toward which the Law would carry us. 1 Tim. 1, 5. Not the behavior of man in his outward works, but a heart filled with purest love

is the chief demand of the Law. And whosoever is perfect in love thereby fulfils the Law, all his works being the fruits of love, love toward God and love toward man. Rom. 13, 10.

CONCLUSION. — We have seen that the Ten Commandments *are the holy will of God, or the Law, wherein God tells me and all other men how we are to be, and what we are to do or not to do, which Law in the creation of man He wrote in man's heart, and afterwards laid down in Ten Commandments written upon two tables, and published through Moses, and whose sum is love.* Qu. 7—12.

God, who Himself is holy, desires us to be holy (Lev. 11, 45). Therefore, let us love His commandments, and to this end walk in the love of God and of our fellow-men.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

(PREFATORY REMARKS. — As we are, with this chapter, entering upon the discussion of the *text* of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, it may be proper at this place to point to the truth that, if the Catechism is really to serve the purpose for which it is intended, *viz.*, to be a guide through the pastures of divine truth; and if it is to be a guide of this kind not only inasmuch as the teacher takes occasion to follow the same trend of thought as the Catechism; if it is rather to be a trusted friend and companion throughout the pupil's whole life, it will be necessary that the pupil should *understand the* CATECHISM. For this reason true and lasting success can be achieved by the teacher only if he really *teaches the Catechism.* Let him go into the depths of divine truth as deeply as the time and the understanding of the pupils will permit. [For this alone — never restrictions placed upon him by the text of the Catechism — will be the limit of possibilities, if, indeed, the catechist is an earnest and diligent student of the Word of God.] But let him do so in such manner that the student may be always aware of the fact that all these truths are contained in the text of the Small Catechism. Concerning the proper use of the text of the Catechism, read also the Preface of the Small Catechism.

The method to be pursued must, of course, always be chosen with due regard to expediency. It may be the analytical method, the catechist developing the truths from the text of the Small Catechism and proving them with Bible-texts. Or it may be the synthetical method, the truths being developed from Bible-texts and then being shown to be contained in the words of the text. But whatever method may be pursued, let the Catechism be the formula by which the truth is expressed and remembered by the pupils. Then, and then only, will the Catechism be and remain a friendly guide for the pupils throughout their lives.

In the preparation for the catecheses upon any portion of the Small Catechism, no catechist can afford to fail to read Luther's own explanation in the Book of Concord.)

INTRODUCTION. — This is the First Commandment in the order in which the Law is recorded in the Bible. It is also the first and greatest with regard to the demands which it makes upon man. (Matt. 22, 37. 38.) It shows what condition of heart God seeks with us. It touches the fountain from which all works should flow. It lays the foundation for the obedience of all the commandments. Hence, this commandment should be studied above all others with an eager mind and a devout heart. — The commandment contains both a prohibition and a command. The prohibition reads: —

I. "Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods before Me."

a. We ask, "What is 'having other gods'?" There is only one true God. "I am the Lord; that is My name." Is. 42, 8. He, and He alone, is the Lord. This is His glory, His praise. And this glory and praise He will guard jealously. "And My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images." As the Lord, He is supreme in power over all." Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased." Ps. 115, 3. All our hope and trust should be placed in Him. He alone is the true God. (Jer. 10, 10.) And beside Him there is no God. (1 Cor. 8, 4.) Hence, we cannot have other gods who are gods in truth.

But men are constantly honoring or regarding created things as they should honor and regard God alone. They are placing created things in the place of God. They are making creatures their gods. ("What is it to have a god? or, what is God? Answer: A god is that whereto we are to look for all good, and whither we are to take refuge in all distress, so that to have a god is to trust and believe him from the whole heart; as I have often said that the confidence and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust be right, then is your god also true. And, on the other hand, if your trust be false and wrong, then you have not the true God; for these two belong together, *viz.,* faith and God. That now, I say, upon which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god." *Large Catechism,* 386, 2. 3.)

These are, of course, not true gods; they are false gods. Another word for "false gods" is "idols." Ps. 115, 4. (1 Cor. 8, 4.) And "having false gods, or idols," is called "idolatry."

In the First Commandment God says: "Thou shalt have no other gods," that is, false gods. This commandment, therefore, forbids idolatry, "all manner of idolatry." Qu. 15. — Such idolatry may be of two kinds, gross idolatry and fine idolatry.

b. *Gross* idolatry is "actually to regard and adore a creature as God." Qu. 15.

1. All men, also such as have not the Bible, know by nature that there is a God. (Rom. 1, 19.) But many are unwilling to seek or to worship the true God. They make creatures their gods, their idols. Some have worshiped the *sun, moon,* and *stars.* (Deut. 4, 19.) Others have made "graven images," that is, carved, or molded, images, the likeness of created things (Deut. 4, 16—18), and worshiped them. So did the children of Israel in the wilderness, Ex. 32, and others (*e. g.,* 1 Sam. 5, 2—5; Acts 19, 24, etc.). This is sinful, Is. 42, 2 (Deut. 4, 15—19; Ex. 20, 4. 5); it is blasphemous, Ps. 115, 3. 4, since it places the true and living God beneath the idol; it is foolish, Ps. 115, 3. 4, because of the utter lack of power to help on the part of the images. — This gross idolatry is forbidden. "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

2. Others do not worship visible things and graven images, but they worship *a god who does not exist at all.* The true God is the Triune God. The Jews do not worship Him; they reject Christ. The Unitarians, Universalists, and others do not worship the Triune God. The lodges also say that they worship the "Supreme Being," the "Universal Father," but do not worship Christ; hence they also do not worship the Triune God. But a god such as these worship does not exist. Their god is the product of their own imagination. It is a false god, an idol. And their worship is not worship of the true God, not even of the Father. John 5, 23. It is idolatry. And it is gross idolatry because they actually worship as god the creature of their own minds. It is forbidden in the words: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

3. Finally, there are such as worship the *true God. But at the same time they worship creatures.* They call upon the departed saints, and expect help and deliverance or intercession from them; yea, they worship before images, and place hope and reliance in the relics of saints, etc. All this is done by the Roman Catholic Church. (See *Large Catechism,* 387, 11.) It is in violation of the will of God. Matt. 4, 10. It is gross idolatry and is prohibited in the words: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

c. *Fine* idolatry is "to fear, love, or trust in creatures as we should fear, love, and trust in God alone." Qu. 15. This is not called "fine idolatry" because it is less sinful than gross idolatry; for it is not. Neither because it is less dangerous; it is rather more dangerous, since it is not recog-

nized as easily. It is called fine idolatry rather because of the very fact that it is harder to be recognized. For while gross idolatry consists in an act which is readily perceived by the eyes and ears, fine idolatry consists in thoughts and sentiments of the heart which in themselves are hidden from the eyes and ears of men.

1. To *"fear . . .* creatures as we should fear . . . God alone" is fine idolatry. Matt. 10, 28. When men threaten with persecution, hatred, ridicule, etc., if we do the will of God, it is idolatry for us to fear them and to do their will rather than to fear the Lord and to do His will. But thus did Peter (Mark 14, 66—72). Herod likewise kept his sinful oath because he feared the censure of his guests (Matt. 14, 9). — To fear man instead of God is fine idolatry. It is forbidden in the words: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

2. To *"love* . . . creatures as we should . . . love . . . God alone" also is fine idolatry. Some love men as they should love God alone. Matt. 10, 37. Children should love their parents, and parents should love their children according to God's will. But both should love God with a greater love. And if they bestow upon parents or children greater love than they bestow upon God, they make these their gods. Thus did Eli (1 Sam. 2, 22—36). Such a one "is not worthy of Me," that is, "cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14, 26). — Others love money more than God. Eph. 5, 5. A "covetous man" is "one who wants to have more" (Greek, *pleonektes*), who will, for this purpose, violate his duty toward God. So did Judas (Matt. 26, 14—16). Likewise the rich young man, who, when he must chose between Christ and his own possessions, chose his riches and forsook Christ, Matt. 19, 16. — Still others love the pleasures of this life. Phil. 3, 19. Their "god is their belly," their own flesh. This they would please. And in the service of their flesh they disregard what pleases God. They "mind earthly things." The rich man, Luke 16, 19, was absorbed in pleasures of the table and of pompous dress to such an extent that he neglected his duties toward God and man. Yea, in the service of their belly, their flesh, they will glory and labor with zeal in things of which they should be ashamed. "Whose glory is in their shame." Herod took delight in the lewd dance of Herodias's daughter; he took pride in it, parading it before his guests, and rewarding it. (Matt. 14, 6. 7.) — To love the creature as God alone should be loved is idolatry and is forbidden in the words: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

3. To *"trust* in creatures as we should trust in God alone" also is fine idolatry. Qu. 15. Some trust in their own understanding. Prov. 3, 5. They believe that their own wisdom will lead them to the desired goal. Thus did the builders of the tower of Babel. They planned. They believed their plans wisely laid. They thought that they must succeed. But they did not seek divine guidance. Their trust in their own understanding was idolatry. — Others make flesh their arm, wherewith to battle and gain victories. (Jer. 17, 5.) They trust in man's strength and ability. Goliath trusted in his own great strength of body to overcome David. (1 Sam. 17, 41—44.) Pharaoh trusted in his own and his army's might, and dared defy God. (Ex. 5, 2.) Sennacherib trusted in his own power, trusted in his army and his own leadership to capture Jerusalem, and warned Hezekiah not to trust in the Lord. (Is. 37, 8—13.) — Still others trust in their possessions. (*Large Catechism,* 387, 5—9.) The rich man whose ground had brought forth plentifully is an example of such. (Luke 12, 16—21.) — All these trust in creatures as they should trust in God alone. They practise idolatry, which is prohibited in the words: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

4. Fine idolatry of another kind is practised by such as *deny the existence of God.* Ps. 14, 1. This is idolatry because it robs God of the glory due unto Him, *viz.,* that men should acknowledge Him as God. It is, however, not only a sin; it is folly as well. For all nature testifies that there is a God. (Rom. 1, 19. 20.) Whence this sinful folly? Answer: "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works." Being ungodly and unwilling to repent, they have a special interest in denying the existence of a God who will punish their sins. This form of idolatry is, therefore, in its last analysis, love of wickedness. It is idolatry which is forbidden in the words: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

Such is the sin of idolatry in its various forms. And it is a sin against which we cannot guard too carefully. For through our natural corruption it clings to us from the cradle to the grave.

Having thus considered the prohibition of the First Commandment, let us not lose sight of the fact that the very form of the commandment includes also a command. For if we are not to have other gods before the Lord, it follows that we should have Him as our God. The command is expressed in the Catechism in the words: —

II. "We Should Fear, Love, and Trust in God above All Things."

a. "We should *fear* . . . God above all things." In the Bible, God has said immediately before the First Commandment: "I am the Lord, thy God." (Ex. 20, 2.) He is the Lord; He has authority; He has the right to punish. And in Gen. 17, 1 He says: "I am the almighty God." He has also power to punish. Being the almighty Lord, He has both authority and power to punish every act of disobedience on our part. We have, therefore, every reason to fear Him. — However, the fear which God demands of us in this commandment is not a mere fear of punishment. Adam and Eve showed such fear. They showed it for the first time after they had sinned; they did not show it while they were righteous. And because they feared with such fear, they hid themselves (Gen. 3, 8. 10). This fear of punishment is the fear of a slave. — God demands another kind of fear. He who said: "I am the Lord," said also: "thy God." He reminds us of the fact that He is our Creator, who has blessed us, to whom we are bound by bonds of gratitude, and of love flowing from gratitude. — Thus the fear which God asks of us consists in the adoring remembrance of His almighty Majesty, coupled with gratitude and love for His love toward us. It is the fear of a good child, which acknowledges its parents to be its superiors, and yet superiors who are its best friends. A child will fear to do what displeases its parents; but this is not fear of punishment so much as rather fear of the sorrow and displeasure which it would cause its parents by its misdeeds. This filial, childlike fear God seeks with us.

This fear of God should guide us constantly. Gen. 17, 1: "Walk before Me and be thou perfect." To walk before God is to walk in His sight, in such a way that He can see us. Of course, God can see all that we do, yea, all that we think. But sometimes we forget this. "Walk before Me," therefore, means for us, "Walk in thought, word, and deed as though you *saw* Me standing and watching you always and looking down into your very inmost heart, bearing in mind that only absolute perfection can please Me." The same kind of fear is demanded in Ps. 33, 8. There it is described as "awe," that is, "fear mingled with respect, or reverence."

Neither is it sufficient that we fear God; we should fear Him *"above all things,"* more than all things. Thus did Joseph. Gen. 39, 9. By consenting to sin, he would have sinned against Potiphar, whose confidence He would have betrayed most shamefully. But though he might justly have

feared Potiphar's just anger, the thought uppermost in his mind was the fear of God. — Thus did also the three men in the fiery furnace. Dan. 3. They feared the king and the fiery furnace, and wished and hoped that God might deliver them. Dan. 3, 17. But they feared God more; the fear of neither king nor fiery furnace could induce them to sin against God. — Thus the fear of God is the cardinal virtue, the greatest safeguard against all manner of sin. Such fear of God is demanded in the words: "Thou shalt fear . . . God above all things." Qu. 16.

b. The First Commandment also requires that "we should . . . love . . . God above all things." Qu. 16. We should *love* Him. "I am the Lord, *thy God.*" (Ex. 20, 2.) He is *our God.* He has created us. He showers blessings upon us every day. He gives us temporal blessings. He gives us spiritual gifts. He seeks our true welfare in time. He would lead us to eternal bliss. — His love demands gratitude. His love towards us demands love on our part towards Him. — He is not merely our Friend and Benefactor; He is our greatest, truest Friend and Benefactor. Therefore, to Him is due our greatest gratitude and love. Hence, we should love Him *"above all things,"* more than anything else.

An expression of such love is found in Ps. 73, 25. 26. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" Heaven with all its glory and bliss, with all the company of angels and of perfected saints, could offer no joy to me if Thou wert not there. "And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." This earth, with all its treasures and pleasures, with all my friends and dear ones, would be barren and desolate and devoid of happiness without Thee. "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the Strength of my heart and my Portion forever." Let my suffering and agony be so great that my flesh and my heart fails, perishes with woe; I shall be strong to bear it all without complaint if I have my God; I shall be content and happy if God is mine; I shall still rejoice in the fact that He is my portion, my treasure, mine own. Such love of God is demanded of us that heaven and earth cannot make us happy if we have not God, and that all suffering and misery is turned into joy by the knowledge that God is our own. (*Ev. Luth. Hymn Book,* 366, 1.)

But such love of God is not sentiment only. It is a power which manifests itself in all our conversation. As a child will gladly do the will of its parents because it loves them, so he who is a child of God, and therefore loves his heavenly Father, will do the will of God gladly and from his heart, even though to do so may require sacrifices and sufferings

on his part. Thus Abraham left his country, his kindred, and his father's house to go forth to a land of which he did not even know the name or the location. He did this because he loved the God who asked this of him. (Gen. 12, 1—4.) Likewise, he was ready to offer up Isaac unto God because the Lord asked it of him. Gen. 22, 1—14. He showed by his action that he loved the Lord more than his own son.

Such love of God is demanded in the words: "We should . . . love . . . God above all things." Qu. 16.

c. Finally, the First Commandment requires that "we should . . . *trust* in God above all things."

To *trust* in God means to put our dependence upon Him — our dependence for strength to carry out our tasks, for protection from dangers, for deliverance from all afflictions. Unto such trust we are exhorted in Ps. 118, 8. This text asks us to trust in the Lord. Thus did David. He had a hard *task* to perform as he went forth to battle against Goliath. For Goliath was large and strong, while David was small and weak. David knew that his strength could not avail. But he trusted in the Lord for help to perform his task. (1 Sam. 17, 45—47.) — Daniel was in *danger* because he did the will of God. But he trusted that the Lord would deliver him. And he lived to praise God for His deliverance. (Dan. 6, 22.) — The three men in the fiery furnace trusted that God could deliver them out of the hand of the king. (Dan. 3, 17.) — David was in such great *affliction* that it seemed as though his sorrow could never be turned into joy. Yet he says to his soul, Ps. 42, 11: "Why art thou cast down," that is, why are you bowed down with grief as though there were no help? "Why art thou disquieted," that is, worried? Though man can see no reason for hope, there is still a firm rock of confidence. "Hope thou in God." And he confidently adds: "For I shall yet praise Him." He also mentions the cause which shall prompt such praise. For He will prove Himself the "health of my countenance," that is, He will make my haggard and sad countenance appear healthy, blooming, beaming with joy. He will turn my sorrow into purest bliss. He will prove that He is still my God, who never forsakes His own.

Nor is it enough to simply *trust* in the Lord. We should trust in Him *above all things.* Ps. 118, 8. Goliath, Pharaoh, Sennacherib, of whom we have heard, trusted in men and found their confidence vain. But none has ever been forsaken who trusted in the Lord. And God demands that you should "trust in the Lord with *all thine heart,*" Prov. 3, 5, that is, that you place *all* your confidence in Him. — True,

we may use created things if God offers help through them, such as good friends, medicines, etc. To despise them is to despise God's means, God's help. But we should look upon them only as means in the hand of God. And if they fail, God still remains our God and will help. (*Large Catechism,* 390, 26. 27.)

Such confidence is demanded in the words: "We should . . . trust in God above all things." Qu. 16.

Conclusion. — Thus we have learned what it is to have other gods, and what it is to have God. This is, as we have seen, the greatest of all commandments. It touches the inmost heart. Therefore, to keep this commandment is to keep the whole Law. — Let us examine ourselves according to it. Then let us flee to the wounds of Christ for cleansing from sins against this commandment, and for strength henceforth to conform more closely to the will of God.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

(Qu. 17—28.)

(Prefatory Remarks. — The Second Commandment touches one of the sorest spots of our American civilization. Profanity in every form is rampant everywhere. Even professed Christians and church-members curse and swear. We hear a universal complaint that the sacredness of the oath is largely ignored. And Christians — even Christian ministers, Sunday-school teachers, etc. — do not feel the impropriety of cheapening the Word of God and of taking His name in vain by using it in idle jesting, and the like. — The faithful catechist will remember this in the discussion of this commandment, seeking to impress upon the minds of the pupils the ungodliness of *every* use of the Word or name of God except to "call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.")

Introduction. — The First Commandment has taught us what attitude of the heart toward God is demanded by the Law. The heart is to be filled with awe, veneration, and love toward God, and confidently to look to Him for every temporal and spiritual blessing. Whether the heart reveres God as it should will be shown very quickly by man's words as he speaks of God and of the things pertaining to God. Having, therefore, shown in the First Commandment what manner of heart the Lord seeks with us, the Law teaches us in the Second Commandment how we should order our speech in accordance with God's will, and how we may learn from our words whether our hearts are filled with the fear, love, and trust of God. — This commandment also contains a prohibition and a command. The prohibition reads:

I. "Thou Shalt Not Take the Name of the Lord, Thy God, in Vain." Qu. 17.

a. What is "the name of God"? Men also have names. These names have been given them by their parents, and they have meanings. (Frederick = peaceful; Anna = graceful, etc.) But often these names do not truly describe the persons who bear them. Thus some persons, though called Frederick, are not peaceful. This is due to the fact that the parents may not have thought of the meaning of the name which they gave their child, and they did not know what kind of person the child would be when it was grown. — God also has names. These have been chosen by Himself. He knew their meanings. He also knew Himself. And He could not be mistaken in the choice which He made. Therefore His names describe Him according to His works, His attributes, or His will; for instance, God = worthy of worship; the Creator; the Holy One; the Most High, King, Father, etc. In His names God describes Himself. And since we can know of God only what He tells us, we say that God reveals Himself to us by His names. Since, then, God reveals Himself to us by His names, we properly call everything God's name which reveals Him, tells us something about Him, whether it is a single word (Lord, God, etc.) or a combination of words, perhaps a whole sentence ("Lord of hosts," "He that sitteth in the heavens," etc.). And since all that is written in the Bible is given for the purpose of revealing God to us in His works, His will, or His attributes, everything that is written in the Bible is properly included in the designation "name of God." Thus the name of God is *"God as He has revealed Himself to us."* Qu. 20. — Therefore the Psalmist says: "According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth." Ps. 48, 10. God's name is everything that can be said of Him. But whatever can be said of Him is His praise. For we cannot praise God in any other way than by telling men who and what He is, what He does, what He wills or desires. Thus His name is what may be said of Him; and His praise is what may be said of Him. His name and His praise are one and the same thing. It is "God as He has revealed Himself to us."

b. This commandment *forbids us to take the name of God in vain.* — God does not forbid us to use His name. On the contrary, we should use it. God has commanded us to do so, as we shall see presently. He has also told us for what purpose we should use it, *viz.,* to praise Him, to magnify His glory. But we *should not take it in vain.* To take God's name in vain means to use the name of God when it does

not serve the purpose of praising Him. Thus, if we use the name of God thoughtlessly — perhaps in thoughtless prayer or merely as an exclamation (O God! O Lord! etc.); if we use the name of God, Biblical expressions, etc., in joking or jesting, we are not glorifying God thereby; we are taking God's name in vain. This is a shameful violation of the command: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain."

But the name of God is often used in connection with acts which in themselves are sinful. Such acts are specified in the words: "We should . . . not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name."

1. "We should . . . not *curse* by His name." To curse by the name of God is either to curse God, or to curse man by God's name.

a. "To *curse God*" is the opposite of "to bless God." To bless God is to praise Him, to say that whereby we honor Him. (Ps. 103, 1.) To curse God, therefore, is to say something whereby we dishonor Him. Another expression for this is "to blaspheme God." Thus, in Lev. 24, 15. 16, the expression "whosoever curseth His God" is explained as meaning: "he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord." — Sennacherib dishonored, cursed, God when by his messengers he told Hezekiah that the Lord could not protect Jerusalem against him (Is. 37, 8—13). The Jews dishonored, blasphemed, cursed Christ when they called Him a Samaritan having a devil (John 8, 48. 52). — To curse God is a most heinous sin. In the Old Testament one who was guilty of this sin was to be put to death according to the will of God. Lev. 24, 16. (The son of Shelomith, Lev. 24, 10—16. 23.) This punishment was to be visited upon him whether he was Jew or Gentile, born in the land or a stranger (Lev. 24, 16b). In the New Testament also the Lord warns most earnestly against this sin. Gal. 6, 7. — Thus, *to curse by the name of God is "to blaspheme God."* Qu. 22.

b. "To curse man" is the opposite of "to bless man." To bless man is to wish good things upon him (Gen. 24, 60). To curse man, therefore, is to wish him evil. To curse man is in itself a sin against the Fifth Commandment. But it becomes a sin also against the Second Commandment if the name of God is used in connection with such cursing. — Thus did Shimei when he cursed David, 2 Sam. 16, 7. 8. He described the affliction of David as an act of God's vengeance upon him; he took delight in it; he wished that it might continue. He thus wished that God's wrath and punishment might come upon David. This was cursing *another, viz.,*

David, by God's name. — When Peter was charged with having been with Christ, he denied Christ. In order that his word of denial might be believed, he cursed, Matt. 26, 74. He did not curse others, but himself. He declared that he would have God punish him if his words were not true. He invoked upon himself the wrath and punishment of God. He cursed *himself* by the name of God. — The Jews before Pilate cried: "His blood come upon us and upon our children," Matt. 27, 25. They asked that the punishment for the slaying of Jesus should come upon themselves and upon their children. They invoked the wrath and punishment of God upon themselves and upon others. This was cursing, cursing by the name of God. Thus, *to curse men by the name of God is "to invoke upon one's self or others the wrath and punishment of God."* Qu. 22.

To curse men by the name of God is a sin against the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain." For to curse man is sin. And to use the name of God in doing so is using the name of God in the service of sin. And here it matters not whether the curse flows from hatred of the heart, or whether it is the result of habit. The name of God was not given to be used in curses. Hence, also, the Bible most earnestly rebukes, and warns against, cursing of every kind, Jas. 3, 9. 10. The lips cannot sincerely bless God and, at the same time, curse man. He who dishonors the name of God by cursing cannot with his heart praise God. His praise of God is sham and hypocrisy, and an abomination before God.

We have thus seen what is meant by *cursing by God's name, viz., "to blaspheme God, or to invoke upon one's self or others the wrath and punishment of God."* Qu. 22.

2. "We should . . . not . . . *swear* . . . by His name."

a. What is "swearing by God's name"? The answer may be gathered from 2 Cor. 1, 23. St. Paul would have the Corinthians firmly believe that it was his love toward them which prompted him not to come to Corinth as yet. No man could look into his heart to judge his motives. Therefore he says, "I call God." This is an oath by the name of God. Swearing by God's name, therefore, is *"to call upon God."* Qu. 23. — He calls God "for a record." God is to see what motives fill his heart, and is to take notice, to record, to remember, so that He may testify that St. Paul speaks the truth, that He may be a witness. Hence, to swear by God's name is "to call upon God *as a witness of the truth.*" Qu. 23. — But St. Paul adds, "Upon my soul." In the sight of God he pledges his soul. If God sees and can testify that he

speaks a falsehood, God's punishment shall be visited upon his soul. God should punish, or avenge falsehood found in him. Hence, to swear by the name of God is *"to call upon God as a witness of the truth or the avenger of falsehood."* Qu. 23.

b. This oath is written by St. Paul, the holy man of God. Moreover, he is writing it by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, this oath cannot be wrong. On the contrary, it is according to the will of God. Hence, not every oath is sinful.

What manner of swearing is pleasing to God? St. Paul swore an oath in order that the Corinthians might not distrust him, but confidently receive and accept his word. By his word they would be instructed to please, and thus to honor, God. Thus God would be glorified. And hence this oath was permitted because it was *demanded by the glory of God.* — In Deut. 6, 13 we read: "Thou shalt fear the Lord, thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name." Here we are commanded to swear by the name of God in the same sentence in which He demands that we fear and serve Him. We should do this instead of worshiping other gods (v. 14). Hence, to swear by the name of God is an act of worship, of giving honor to Him. Whenever we can honor, worship, the Lord by our oath, it is lawful to swear. (The oaths of the lodges are acts of worship to another than the true God and, therefore, idolatrous, ungodly, not permitted.) Thus we find that, *"whatever swearing is demanded by the glory of God,"* Qu. 25, is permitted and even enjoined, Deut. 6, 13. — An oath of this kind was sworn by Christ, Matt. 26, 63. 64. (To adjure = to ask under oath. — Other lawful oaths: oaths of ordination, confession.)

St. Paul's oath, 2 Cor. 1, 23, inspired by the Holy Ghost, would also benefit the Corinthians. For believing him, they would accept his teaching and thus be strengthened in faith and a godly life. Hence, an oath is proper *whenever man is benefited thereby.* For this reason the oath of Abraham's servant was right and proper, Gen. 24, 3. — By an oath we appeal to God, the highest authority. Therefore an oath should remove all uncertainty, and end all strife and dispute. And for this purpose it may be used, Heb. 6, 16. Hence also the government has a right to demand an oath whenever, in the performance of its duties, it must have full assurance of the truth. And whenever the government asks it, a Christian may swear, following the example of Jesus, Matt. 26, 63. 64. Hence, *"whatever swearing is demanded by*

the welfare of our neighbor" is permitted and even enjoined. Qu. 25.

Lawful oaths, then, include *"whatever swearing is demanded by the glory of God and the welfare of our neighbor."* Qu. 25.

c. But not all oaths serve this purpose. And all oaths which do not serve this purpose are forbidden. In Matt. 26, 74 we are told that Peter "began to swear." We are also told to what statement he made oath, v. 72. He swore that he did not know the Lord. This was a falsehood. To call upon God to avenge the falsehood which we ourselves know we are uttering is directly and unconditionally to challenge the wrath of God for time and for eternity. It is as direct an effrontery to God as can be thought of, and shall surely not go unpunished. — Of the same kind are, of course, all promises under oath which are broken. (Ezek. 17, 12—19.) Such swearing is called *false swearing, or perjury.* — Acts 23, 12 we are told of certain Jews who bound themselves "under a curse," that is, by a horrible oath, to kill Paul. They used the name of God to confirm a mutual promise to commit a great sin. Likewise, Herod promised under oath to reward the lewd dance of the daughter of Herodias, Matt. 14, 7. To reward sin is in itself a sin. Thus Herod promised under oath to commit a sin. Swearing of this kind dishonors God, and is, for this reason, called *blasphemous swearing.* (Oaths of lodges are blasphemous for another reason. They dishonor God by swearing by another than the true God.) In the case of a promise under oath to commit sin, there can be no question as to whether these oaths should be performed or not. Herod, for instance, should have broken the oath. It was a sin to make the oath; to keep it required another sin. The right and proper thing for him to do would have been to repent of the oath and not to sin thenceforth, not even by doing what he had sworn to do. Not to break a sworn promise to sin is only a new sin. — Herod's oath is also an example of another kind of sinful oaths. Herod did not know what the daughter of Herodias would ask. She might have asked for something which it would have been lawful to give. But she also might — and actually did — ask for something which Herod could not give without sinning. Herod did not know for a certainty what he was actually promising under oath. He did not know whether the oath was right or wrong. It was an *oath in uncertain things.* (Oaths of lodges.) — Finally, Herod's oath was an oath which was not necessary at all. His simple word would have been sufficient. To swear when

it is not necessary is called *frivolous swearing.* Such frivolous swearing is prohibited also in Matt. 5, 33—37. The Pharisees distinguished between the solemn oath in which the name of God was actually mentioned, and such oaths as the swearing "by heaven," "by Jerusalem," "by my head," etc. This is mockery of the holiness of the oath and, in truth, swearing by the name of God. The Savior condemns such swearing and, in fact, the use of all oaths in ordinary conversation, in trivial, unimportant matters. "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Thus the words, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain," prohibit *"false, blasphemous, and frivolous swearing, and all oaths in uncertain things."* Qu. 24.

3. "We should . . . not . . . use *witchcraft* . . . by His name."

a. What is "using witchcraft"? This is seen from the example of Saul, 1 Sam. 28. Saul had departed from the ways of the Lord. When he was in distress, he inquired of God with regard to the future. But he did not repent of his sin. God did not answer him. He then sought to ascertain the events of the future by inquiring through the witch of Endor from the spirits of the dead. To ascertain the future is a thing which cannot be done by natural means; it is a supernatural thing. Saul tried to do a supernatural thing. The witch of Endor tried to do a supernatural thing when she sought to bring up a spirit of the dead. So did also the Egyptian sorcerers when they tried to turn their rods into serpents (Ex. 7, 11. 12). — It was not the help of God upon which Saul, or the witch of Endor, or the Egyptian sorcerers depended. For God refused to answer Saul; the witches had formerly been destroyed by Saul at God's command; the Egyptian sorcerers used their power to discredit the word and command of God. If, then, it was neither the power of man nor the power of God upon which these relied, it could only be — even though they had no clear knowledge of the fact — the power of the devil, for which reason these arts are also called "satanic arts." Qu. 26.

Therefore, to use witchcraft is to "perform supernatural things" by the power of the devil.

Various acts of witchcraft are mentioned in Deut. 18, 10—18. ("One that useth divination" = a fortune-teller; "an observer of times" = one who selects "lucky" or "unlucky" days; this would apply with equal force to "unlucky" numbers, signs, etc.; "an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer,

. . . or a wizard" = one who conjures, or by the help of the devil exerts, supernatural influence, as healing wounds, causing sickness, etc.; this would apply also to the use of talismans and amulets, as horseshoes, etc.; "consulter with familiar spirits" = a person said to have a familiar spirit, conversing with spirits; also one who inquires of such, as Saul did; "a necromancer" = one who has intercourse with the dead; this would include spiritualism.) These things were sin not only for the children of Israel because they were under the ceremonial and civil law of the Old Testament; they are sins against the moral law, which is binding upon all men. For whole nations were destroyed on account of "these abominations" by the Lord. "Because of these abominations doth the Lord, thy God, drive them out from before thee." Therefore they should not occur anywhere, least of all among Christians. Acts 19, 19 (the books of curious arts).

To "use witchcraft" is, as we have seen, *"to perform supernatural things, such as conjuring, fortune-telling, consulting the dead, and similar satanic arts."* Qu. 26.

If the question is asked whether, at least apparently, supernatural occurrences are actually produced by the practise of such arts, we may point to the fact that such apparent effects may be mere coincidence, or that they may be based upon deception. Yet, we need not deny the possibility of supernatural occurrences. (Matt. 24, 24: "and shall show great signs and wonders.") But if they do occur, they are not wrought by the power of God, who has forbidden such practises, nor by the power of man, for then they would not be supernatural, but by the devil. In that case God permits the devil to work them as a punishment for man's disobedience, so that such as practise them contrary to God's command are hardened in their sin. But no child of God can practise them or seek to benefit by them; for that would be accepting favors from the devil. He might have to pay for them with his soul.

b. Witchcraft is in itself a sin against the First Commandment. It is having other gods. But it becomes a sin against the Second Commandment also whenever the name of God is used in its practise. For this is a use of the name of God in the performance of sin. It is abuse of the name of God in a most shameful manner. God has not given a promise of His assistance; He has not commanded the use of His name in such a manner. He has forbidden the act itself. He has also forbidden the use of His name in connection therewith by issuing the commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain."

To use witchcraft by God's name, therefore, is *"using God's name or Word without His command and promise to perform supernatural things, such as conjuring, fortune-telling, consulting the dead, and similar satanic arts."* Qu. 26.

4. "We should . . . not . . . *lie* or *deceive* by His name."

a. To lie is to speak a falsehood. To deceive is to speak or to act with the intention, and in such a way as, to cause others to believe what is not true. Lying and deceiving is in itself a sin against the Eighth Commandment. But whenever the name of God is used in connection with such lying and deceiving, a sin is committed also against the Second Commandment. For to use the name of God in connection with sin is a wrongful use, and is prohibited in the words: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain."

b. Such lying and deceiving by God's name is forbidden in Jer. 23, 31. The Lord there speaks of prophets. A prophet is one who preaches or teaches the Word of God. (Deut. 18, 18b.) His tongue is not his own, but the Lord's. But here God speaks of prophets who use their own tongue. They do not speak what the Lord commands them to speak; they speak their own thoughts. But they say, "He saith." They are lying and deceiving by the name of God. (To illustrate, any false doctrine may be used as an example, for instance, the false doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper.) — Such false prophets are also mentioned in Matt. 7, 21. That the Lord is here speaking of false prophets is seen from v. 15. They are preaching as divine truth what is not the Word of God. In this they are lying by the name of God. They are adding deceit to this sin. For they say, "Lord, Lord." One who says, "Lord, Lord" will ordinarily be considered a sincere and obedient Christian. This is what they desire. Men should consider them true and faithful prophets of the Lord so that they may believe their words. In order to make it appear as though they were true prophets of the Lord, they use the name of God. This is deceiving by the name of God. — To preach as divine truth what is not the Word of God is to preach false doctrine. And to say, "He saith," or, "Lord, Lord," is making it appear good and true, is adorning it with the name of God. — Thus "adorning false doctrine . . . with the Word or name of God" (Qu. 27) is lying and deceiving by the name of God.

To lie or deceive by the name of God is to preach or teach false doctrine. This is forbidden in the words: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain." Such sin God will punish. He says: "Behold, I am against the

prophets," etc.; I will punish them. And again He says: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7, 21. Those who prophesy the truth, those who preach pure doctrine in the name of God, alone are pleasing in His sight.

c. Again, in Matt. 15, 8, the Lord speaks of such as are ungodly, unbelieving at heart. "Their heart is far from Me." They are not Christians. But they would make it appear as though they were children of God. And in order to hide their ungodliness, they utter pious words with their lips. They draw nigh unto Christ with their mouth; they honor Him with their lips. They use the name of God in order to make their ungodliness appear godliness, in order to adorn their ungodly life. Thus, *"adorning ungodly life with the Word or name of God"* (Qu. 27) is lying and deceiving by the name of God. — Thus did Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5, 1—11. Their hearts clung unto their possessions. Yet they would appear as such as readily gave up all that they had for the brethren for Christ's sake. They brought part of their possessions into the house of God, and stated that it was all that they had. They lied and deceived. And they used the name of God in doing this. — Thus also did the scribes and Pharisees, Matt. 23. They were ungodly and unbelieving at heart. But they did many works and spoke many words which outwardly appeared to be the works and words of true Christians. But they did them merely "for to be seen of men," Matt. 23, 5. They practised deceit, and in doing so, they used the name and Word of God freely. They adorned ungodly life with the name and Word of God. They lied and deceived by the name of God.

Adorning ungodly life with the name and Word of God is called hypocrisy. It is a sin against the commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain." The Lord punishes it severely. Ananias and Sapphira were slain by the hand of God. And to the scribes and Pharisees, Christ says that they shall receive the greater damnation, Matt. 23, 14.

Thus we have seen that lying and deceiving by God's name is *"adorning false doctrine or ungodly life with the name or Word of God."* Qu. 27.

In the foregoing we have considered the prohibition contained in the Second Commandment in the words: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain," and in the words: "We should fear and love God that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name."

The words, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain," however, imply that we should use the name of God, and that we should use it in accordance with His will. (*Large Catechism,* 397, 64.) The explanation of the commandment, therefore, contains also this command: —

II. "We Should . . . Call upon It in Every Trouble, Pray, Praise, and Give Thanks."

a. "We should . . . *call upon it* in every trouble." In the First Commandment we heard that we should trust in God above all things, that we should expect help and deliverance from Him alone. The Second Commandment teaches us how we should give expression to such trust and confidence. We should call upon the name of God in every trouble. The Lord Himself expressly enjoins this, Ps. 50, 15. We should call upon Him; we should call upon Him in every trouble of body and soul, property and honor; in every trouble, no matter how great or small it may be. — Hannah is an example of one who called upon the Lord in great temporal sorrow, 1 Sam. 1, 1—11. On the other hand, Mary prayed in lesser trouble at the marriage in Cana (John 2, 1—11). — Again, we hear of those who called upon the name of the Lord in great spiritual trouble. Thus did the publican in the Temple (Luke 18, 14) and the malefactor upon the cross (Luke 23, 39—42). Such calling upon the name of the Lord is pleasing to Him. For He Himself has commanded us to do so. He has also shown that He is pleased with it, inasmuch as He has ever been ready to answer prayer. By calling upon God in *every* trouble, we give proof of the fact that all our trust is placed in Him.

b. "We should . . . *pray.*" We should not remember God only when we are in trouble. Also in days of happiness we should daily come before Him, address Him, speak to Him of our joys, our hopes, our desires, and ask His continued blessing and protection upon ourselves and upon our fellowmen. (*Large Catechism,* 399, 71—73.) Thus did Daniel, Dan. 6, 10. This is the will of God, Matt. 7, 7. (1 Thess. 5, 17.) And by such intimate and childlike intercourse the name of God is truly honored.

c. "We should . . . *praise.*" To praise the name of God is to tell of "God as He has revealed Himself," to tell of His greatness, goodness, wisdom, and the works which He has done for us. This was done by Hannah after the Lord had granted her request, 1 Sam. 2, 1—10. This is done also wherever His Word is preached in its truth and purity. For

thereby God is made known as He has revealed Himself to us. Such praise is right and pleasing before God. For He Himself commands us to praise, Ps. 103, 1.

d. "We should . . . *give thanks.*" To thank is to acknowledge the goodness, the blessings which God has bestowed upon us, and which we have recognized as such. We have abundant cause to do this. For God has not only created us; He has also redeemed us, and keeps us and blesses us daily with bodily and spiritual gifts. And by thanking Him, we duly acknowledge Him to be our best Friend and greatest Benefactor. Such thanks He demands at our hands, Ps. 118, 1, and therewith He is well pleased (Luke 17, 19).

Thus the Second Commandment requires of us with regard to the name of God that *"we should . . . call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks."* Qu. 28.

Conclusion. — Such use of the name of God should not be merely the work of the lips. On the contrary, the thoughts, words, and deeds which the Second Commandment requires of us should but be the evidence that our hearts are in harmony with His will, especially with the demands of the First Commandment, that we "fear, love, and trust in God above all things." Therefore we also introduce the explanation of this and of all other commandments with the words, "We should fear and love God." Qu. 19. A pure and righteous heart must be the fountain of all works which are to please God. Hence, also in considering this commandment, we have every reason to examine our inmost hearts, and then, recognizing our sinfulness, to flee to the wounds of Christ for healing, and for strength henceforth to walk more fully in the ways of the Law of God.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

(Qu. 29—35.)

Introduction. — The First Commandment of the Law taught us what attitude of the heart towards God is required of man. The Second Commandment showed how our lips should be governed by the spirit which dwells in the heart. The Third Commandment teaches us to give evidence of the godliness of the heart by showing love and zeal for the Word of God.

In the study of this commandment we consider three points.

I. The Sabbath.

a. In the text of the Law as given upon Mount Sinai, and as recorded in Ex. 20, 8—11, the Third Commandment reads: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," etc. The Sabbath-day mentioned here was a certain day of the week which God required the children of Israel to observe. It was the seventh day of the week, Saturday. On this day the Jews were not permitted to perform any kind of work. Nor were they to permit their children, their servants, their cattle, or the stranger within their walls to do any kind of work on that day. They were not to perform even such small and apparently necessary tasks on that day as to cook food (Ex. 16, 23), or to kindle a fire (Ex. 35, 3). Absolute rest was demanded of them on that day. Hence also the name "Sabbath," meaning "rest." And God was in earnest when He made this demand. For whosoever transgressed this commandment was to be put to death. (Ex. 35, 2.) This punishment was actually meted out to a man who had picked up sticks (kindling-wood) on the Sabbath-day (Num. 15, 32—36).

b. Is this command still in force? Seventh-day Adventists say it is. And they actually try to keep it. Most other denominations also say it is. But they do not attempt to keep it fully. For they substitute another day for the Sabbath. — If the Sabbath command of the Old Testament is still in force, we must keep the seventh day of the week. For God's command applied to that day only. He has never said: "Rest one day in seven, any day of the week, so it be one in seven." But if the Sabbath command is still in force in the Christian Church, then the early Christians sinned when they began to observe Sunday instead of the Sabbath (1 Cor. 16, 2; Acts 20, 7). Then we are not permitted to do any kind of work on Saturday; then we are not permitted to cook a cup of coffee, or even to kindle a fire on that day. And nothing that we may do or leave undone on any other day of the week will relieve us of the duty of absolute rest on Saturday.

c. In Matt. 12, 8 we are told that "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day." He is God; He has instituted the day; *He has the right to abolish it* whenever He chooses — whenever, according to His will, it has accomplished the purpose for which it was given. Has He, then, abolished it? Col. 2, 16. 17 St. Paul tells us: "Let no man, therefore, judge you," etc. There can be judging only where there is a law; and wherever there is a law, there must needs be

a judge. If, then, St. Paul tells us: "Let no man judge you," it is evident that there is no law with regard to the things in which we should let no man judge us. Which are these? "Meat" (Old English for food) "or drink." The Jews had certain laws with regard to meat and drink. But for the Christians of the time of the New Testament there is no longer any such law. The Jews were commanded to observe certain holy-days, as the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Atonement (Lev. 23). But in the New Testament there is no law requiring the observance of these holy-days. The Jews were required to observe certain ceremonies at the time of the new moon (Num. 10, 10; 28, 11. 12). But since the days of Christ nothing of the kind is demanded. Finally, we are not to let any man judge us in respect "of the Sabbath-days." The children of God of the Old Testament were required to observe the Sabbath. But after the coming of Christ we are perfectly at liberty to observe or not to observe the commands concerning the Sabbath; and no matter whether we observe them or whether we disregard them, no man is to judge us. If, then, none is to judge us herein, it is evident that, for us, there is no law with regard to the Sabbath-days. What was said to the children of Israel about these is no longer in force; it is abrogated in its entirety. Hence, *the law concerning the observance of the Sabbath is no longer in force.* "In the New Testament all this has been abolished by God Himself." Qu. 31. (See also *Augsburg Confession,* Art. XXVIII, 58. 59.)

d. But *why* did God, who demanded so rigid an observance of the Sabbath in the days of the Old Testament, abrogate this law entirely after the coming of Christ? The reason is mentioned in the words: "Which were a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." If we see a shadow approaching, though no body is yet in view, we may know nevertheless that a body is approaching. From the shadow we may, furthermore, learn various things about that body, *e. g.,* whether the body is that of man or beast; a man or woman; whether it is bareheaded, etc. So the Sabbath is called the shadow of Christ. It was to remind and assure the children of God in the Old Testament of the promised coming of Christ; it was, furthermore, to tell them something about Christ. For the Sabbath brought rest, complete rest. So also Christ was to bring rest. But the body is more perfect than the shadow. So also the fulfilment in Christ of the things prefigured by the Sabbath is greater than the shadow, the Sabbath, itself. The Sabbath brought rest for the body; Christ brought rest for the soul. The Sabbath

brought rest from the labors of life's calling; Christ brought rest from the labor of sin and from the curse of the Law. The Sabbath brought rest for one day in seven, Christ has brought rest and peace for every day. The rest of the Sabbath ended after twenty-four hours; the rest of the soul in Christ lasts throughout life, yea, throughout eternity. We have thus received infinitely more in Christ than the Sabbath could ever offer to man. Yea, Jesus Christ is the everlasting Sabbath of our souls. Hence, also, we do no longer need the Sabbath of the Old Testament. The coming of Christ has ended all need or use of the Old Testament Sabbath. Therefore, also, God has abolished the law concerning the Sabbath. We have no divine command in the New Testament requiring that we should rest on the seventh day of the week, nor even that we should rest on one day in seven. Qu. 31.

e. But the Third Commandment requires us to *"sanctify* the holy-day." To sanctify means "to make or to keep holy." How is this done? "Every creature of God . . . is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4, 4. 5). If, then, we are to sanctify a certain day, we must use the Word of God and prayer on that day. Of course, we should do this every day and everywhere. But the Bible makes the special demand upon us that we should do this not only privately, but that we should assemble with our brethren in Christ for the purpose of hearing the Word of God and of praying. Having admonished the Christians to worship, St. Paul continues: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is," Heb. 10, 25. The assemblies to which he here refers were gatherings for the purpose of divine worship. And what was done at these gatherings is seen from Acts 2, 42: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (the Word of God was read and preached) "and in fellowship" (they all took part in the use of the means of grace and in prayer; they felt that the Word unites them all in one as brethren of the household of God, unites them by the holy ties of the blood of Christ) "and in breaking of bread" (that is, the Lord's Supper) "and in prayers." Such meetings of the brethren for the worship of God Christians should not forsake; they should attend them; they should come to them regularly, never being absent if by any means they can attend. — The Bible does not tell us when these meetings should take place. We may assemble on Monday, Tuesday, etc.; we may meet in the morning, at noon, or at night. All this is left to us. But, of course, we must have a fixed time; else none would know when to come. Therefore a certain day has been chosen. The early Chris-

tians did not choose the Saturday, the Sabbath-day of the Jews, though that would have been the most convenient day for them. They chose another day in order to show that they knew that they had the true Sabbath in Christ, and did not need the Old Testament Sabbath any longer. (See *Augsburg Confession,* Art. XXVIII, 60.) They chose Sunday in preference to any other day because that was the day on which Christ rose from the dead. And we have followed their example. — In addition, we have chosen certain special holy-days, such as Christmas, Easter, etc. (The catechist should here take occasion to explain the arrangement of the church-year and the meaning and importance of the various church-festivals.)

On Sundays and on the other holy-days upon which Christians assemble for the purpose of hearing the Word of God, we ordinarily do not perform hard manual labor. The reason for this is not that God has commanded us to rest on these days. But in order to be able to give our time and devotion to the Word of God, we must lay aside, for the time being, the ordinary works of our calling. And since these days have been set aside for the use of the means of grace, a Christian should not show contempt for such usage, nor give offense by taking up the ordinary tasks of every-day life, but should devote these days to the "assembling of ourselves together," and thus continue steadfastly with his brethren in "the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Thus, *we celebrate Sunday and other festivals "not by divine command, but in order to have time and opportunity for public worship."* Qu. 32.

II. The Prohibition: "We Should . . . Not Despise Preaching and His Word."

a. We should not despise *"preaching and His Word."* These words distinguish between "preaching" and "God's Word." This is not to be understood as though preaching were not the Word of God. On the contrary, the preaching which is mentioned here is the preaching of the Word of God. For its object is to be that those who hear it might come unto, or be established in, faith. For "faith cometh by hearing." But in order to be able to accomplish this result, it must be preaching of the Word of God. For only such preaching works faith; "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom. 10, 17.) And every true preacher will preach in such a way that the words of Christ may be true of Him: "He that heareth you heareth Me,"

Luke 10, 16. By the word "preaching" our Catechism rather points to public worship as distinguished from the private use of the Word. In public worship the Word of God is *preached* publicly. This public preaching includes not only the Word as it is brought to men in the sermon or in the reading of Scripture-passages, but in the public administration of the Sacraments, in the singing of hymns, and in the common prayers as well. The Word of God as it is used in all these ways in public worship is described as "preaching" in our Catechism. Then our Catechism adds, "and His Word." This is to remind us that we have the Word not only in public worship; we have it also in the Bible and in books of worship, which we may read at home. "Preaching and His Word," therefore, is public worship with sermon, Sacraments, hymns, and prayers, and also the written Word, which we may read and learn at home.

b. "We *should not despise*" preaching and His Word. To despise something means not to prize, not to value it as it should be prized and valued. Preaching and God's Word, therefore, is despised not only by such as do not attend public worship, or as do not use the written Word of God and the Sacraments. These sin in the grossest manner possible, especially if they openly blaspheme and ridicule the Word. They clearly show that they love neither God's Word nor God Himself. — Such also despise it as still use preaching and His Word, but who are very indifferent and irregular in such use. They allow trivial things to prevent their appearance in the house of God, they seldom partake of the Lord's Supper, and they are very rarely seen reading the Bible at home. — Those also are guilty of contempt who use the Word of God with great regularity, but, while they hear it, do not keep it. (Luke 8, 4—15.) — All these "despise preaching and His Word" by "negligently, carelessly, or not at all attending public worship or using the written Word of God and the Sacraments." Qu. 34. (*Large Catechism,* 402, 88—92.)

c. To "despise preaching and His Word" is a fearful sin. For despising the Word which is preached is not despising the man only who is preaching it; it is despising Christ and the Father as well, Luke 10, 16. In John 8, 47 Christ tells us why some do not hear the Word of God: they are not of God, but of the devil. And His statement in this place, "Ye hear them not," *i. e.,* ye hear not the words of God, apply not only to such as do not hear them at all, but also to such as hear the words outwardly, but who do not hear them in the proper spirit. For those to whom Christ

spoke these words indeed heard them with their ears, but they did not hear them with love, devotion, and faith. Hence, all such as do not hear the Word of God with love, devotion, and faith are not of God, but of the devil. — The scribes and Pharisees were of this class, Luke 7, 30. They heard Christ's words; but they neither believed them, nor did they obey the will of God unto their salvation. They would not be baptized for the remission of their sins. They rejected the counsel of God against themselves. They brought upon themselves damnation. They would not accept the knowledge which God would impart through His Word. Therefore God will reject them, Hos. 4, 6.

We have thus seen that all those disobey the commandment: "Thou shalt sanctify the holy-day" who "despise preaching and His Word."

III. "We Should . . . Hold It Sacred, and Gladly Hear and Learn It."

a. We should "hold it sacred." "Sacred" means "designated or exalted by divine sanction; possessing the highest title to obedience, honor, reverence, or veneration" (Webster). "Preaching and His Word" is always sacred; it always possesses the highest title to obedience, honor, reverence, or veneration. It is always entitled thereto because God has so willed it. And whether we act accordingly, or whether we despise it, does not alter God's will or decree in the least. Hence we are not commanded to *"make* it sacred." But we are commanded to *"hold* it sacred," to bear in mind that it *is* sacred, to regard it as being sacred, and to give it "obedience, honor, reverence, and veneration." This is what the Lord demands in Is. 66, 2. In vv. 1. 2a He has declared: "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me, and where is the place for My rest? For all those things hath Mine hand made, and those things have been." Having thus described His infinite power and majesty, He declares that He will look to this man, that is, delight in him, have pleasure in him, who with a poor and contrite spirit acknowledges man's vanity and "trembleth at My Word." To tremble at the Word of God, then, is to regard it as the Word of Him who is infinite in power and majesty, and who will yet in mercy be pleased with the adoration which man can offer to His Word and name. If we regard the Word of God in this spirit, we are holding it sacred. — We are thus to hold sacred *"preaching,"* that is, the Word and Sacraments as used and administered in public worship, 1 Thess. 2, 13. We

should thus hold sacred also *"His Word"* as distinguished from "preaching," that is, the words as we have them written in the Bible, and as we may read and ponder them at home.

b. How is this done?

1. Our Catechism says: "We should . . . gladly *hear* . . . it." — We should *hear* it. This requires first and above all that we should "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together," Heb. 10, 25. We should *come* to the house of God. We should come whenever the congregation assembles for divine worship. There is no Biblical reason why we should distinguish between Sunday services and week-day services. God has appointed neither the one nor the other. But God has commanded us to assemble for the public use of His Word. Whenever the congregation does this, we, too, should come by divine command. He who needlessly absents himself from a week-day service sins just as truly as he who neglects Sunday services. — An example of one who faithfully attended public worship is Hannah, 1 Sam. 1. — We should come *for the purpose of hearing* the Word. Eccl. 5, 1. Some come because it is a mere custom, or because they like to meet people, or because they want to display their fine clothing, or because they want to have a reputation for godliness, or because they seek entertainment; but they do not come because they want to hear the Word of God. Yet they imagine they are doing God a service, bringing Him a sacrifice. But they are called fools, and their coming is "the sacrifice of fools." Their folly consists in this, that they imagine that God is pleased with their coming. To come for purposes of this kind is not to serve God. "They do evil." — We are furthermore told: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God." With our feet we walk. "Keep thy foot," therefore, means: Watch your foot, be careful how you walk. It is not the bodily walking to which these words refer, but the spiritual walking. We should be careful *in what state of mind we come.* If we go to an important function, the event before us will make its impression upon our minds. A different spirit will be found in him who goes to a wedding from the spirit of him who goes to a funeral. Either of them may greet a friend, speak to him, etc., on the way; but the function which he is to attend is uppermost in his mind. To go to the house of God for the purpose of hearing the voice of God should be so important an event for us that it will be uppermost in our minds and fill us with devotion even on our way; and though we should find occasion, for instance, to speak a friendly greeting to a friend on the way, our heart and mind should

even then be dwelling with Him whose voice we are coming to hear. He who does not feel such devotion even on the way to the house of God is not taking the Word of God as seriously as he should; he is not holding preaching as sacred as the Lord demands. — Neither should we come as such as would rather not come, but who feel that they must. We should *"gladly* hear" the Word of God, Ps. 26, 6—8. The Psalmist would compass, that is, be about, the altar of the Lord; he would be where the altar is to be found, that is, in the house of God. He would be there, "that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Thy wondrous works." He would whole-heartedly take part with the children of God in praying, in singing, in praising God. And he would join in all this with his whole heart because "I have loved the habitation of thy house," not because of the beauty of the building, etc., but because it is "the place where Thine honor dwelleth." To attend "preaching" in this spirit is to "gladly hear it." — Thus Jesus gladly heard the Word, tarrying in the Temple even when He knew that His parents were turning homeward, Luke 2, 41—52. Likewise the prophetess Anna, who so loved the house of God that she spent all her time within its walls, Luke 2, 35—37. (The catechist should take occasion to point out that, because of the Word, pupils should love their Christian day-school, Sunday-school, confirmation-class.)

If we thus love the house of God and public worship, we shall be *anxious and ready to maintain it within our midst.* And since its maintenance requires money (for buildings, etc., and especially for the support of the servants of the Word), we will show our love of the Word by bringing offerings from our possessions for this purpose. This is demanded in Gal. 6, 6. We notice that whoever "is taught in the Word" should "communicate," that is, give. This, therefore, does not apply to the voting members of the church only, nor to the men only. This is the duty and privilege of every one who is taught — men, women, and children. The head of the family may give for all; but this is an act of worship, and he should not deprive the rest of the family of this privilege. He should let his wife and his children also worship God by giving in their own name. Such of his children as must still depend upon him for everything should be supplied by him also with the means for this form of worship; all such as earn their own money should bring sacrifices of their own earning unto God. Whoever hears the Word and is unwilling to do this, thereby proves that he does not hear "preaching" gladly.

We should not love "preaching," that is, public worship, only; we should love also "His Word" as we have it outside the house of God. We should love to sit at Jesus' feet also at home, as did Mary, the sister of Martha, Luke 10, 39. This we can do by reading the Bible at home. We should, furthermore, speak of it as of the source of our greatest joy to all with whom we may come in contact. Thus did the shepherds (Luke 2, 20) and the prophetess Anna, Luke 2, 38. We should sing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" unto our God. Especially should Christian families make their homes temples of God, where the whole family daily gathers in family worship about the Word which they love. (The catechist should enlarge upon this and advise the pupils how to conduct family worship, recommending such books as Kuegele's *Book of Devotion.*) Such are the things which the apostle has in mind when he says: "Let the Word of Christ," etc., Col. 3, 16. Whoever is disinclined to read, speak, and sing of the mighty deeds of God does not "gladly hear His Word."

2. To hold preaching and His Word sacred includes, according to our Catechism, also this that we "gladly . . . *learn* it."

We should learn it *as the Word of God.* We must, therefore, believe that it is the Word of God. This holds good not only with regard to the words of the Bible which we read, but also with regard to the truths of the Word which are preached or taught by men. When the Thessalonians heard men preaching the truths of God, they received what these spoke as though God had spoken it to them. 1 Thess. 2, 13. And this was right; for the Apostle says: "It is in truth the Word of God." Likewise, Christ said unto His disciples that whosoever would hear them preaching at His command would hear Him speaking through them. Therefore, even though it is man who speaks the Word of God, we should accept it as though we saw God standing before us and heard Him speaking to us. — To learn it is, furthermore, to remember it and to think about it. Thus did Mary, the mother of Jesus, Luke 2, 51. — And, finally, it must be a living power in our hearts. In order to be blessed, we must indeed hear the Word. But to hear it is not sufficient; we must also keep it, Luke 11, 28. To keep it does not mean merely to remember it. It means to believe, obey, trust in, and comfort ourselves with the Word of God (the promises of the Gospel, the assurances received in Baptism and in the Lord's Supper). (Luke 8, 15; Jas. 1, 22.)

Thus we sanctify the holy-day, yea, we make all our days

holy-days in Christ, and thus enjoy fully the true Sabbath in Christ, if we *"hold preaching and God's Word sacred, and gladly hear and learn it."* Qu. 35.

Conclusion. — To keep this commandment outwardly is not a difficult task. Many who are not the children of God have, by its outward observance, made a show of godliness. But, oh, how often we fail to remember and to comfort ourselves with the promises of the Word and of the Sacraments! What lack of love for, and of joy in, "preaching and His Word"! How still more frequently do we fail to bring forth proper fruit! Let us recognize and confess this before the throne of God, firmly trusting that the blood of Christ can cleanse us also from these sins, and that, by its power, we shall receive grace unto continued growth in faith and a godly life.

THE SECOND TABLE.

(Qu. 36. 37.)

Introduction. — We have completed the discussion of the First Table of the Law, comprising the first three commandments. These commandments have taught us our duty toward God. We notice their beautiful connection and the intimate relation which they have one to another. Luther points out that they form a golden ring; for having passed from the beginning to the end, we have again arrived at the beginning: The First Commandment inculcated faith; the Second teaches us that use of the name of God which flows from faith; the Third teaches us to love the Word of the God in whom we believe, to join in His praise (Second Commandment), and to keep, to believe, and to trust in, His Word and promise (First Commandment). — We now proceed to the Second Table, which teaches us to love man with the love which flows from the love of God. Christ Himself has told us that the sum of the seven commandments of the Second Table is: —

"Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself." Matt. 22, 39.

I. "Who Is My Neighbor?"

This same question was asked of our Savior by a scribe, Luke 10, 29. Jesus answered it by telling him the history of the good Samaritan, Luke 10, 30—37: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." A priest and a Levite, members of his own nation, coming the same way, saw him,

but passed by without helping him. But a Samaritan saw him and helped him. Jesus then asked the scribe, "Which of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor to him that fell among thieves?" The answer was evident, and the scribe replied readily. Not the priest or the Levite, but "he that showed mercy on him." The priest and the Levite also should have helped the wounded man. For Christ rebukes their action when, referring to the Samaritan, He says to the scribe, "Go and do thou likewise." They should have acted the part of neighbors because the wounded man needed their help. Thus it is the need which men have of active love which establishes the relation of neighbors between them and others according to the will of God; and hence he is our neighbor *"who is in need of our love."* Qu. 37. Therefore St. Paul says: "As we have therefore opportunity," etc. Gal. 6, 10. If we have opportunity to show love to some one, he thereby becomes our neighbor. — This is true with regard to any one. The Savior does not say who it was that fell among the thieves. He simply describes him as "a certain man." The Samaritan probably did not know him. For he was of another nation and of another faith. But he was a man, a human being; and he was in need of help. This fact alone made it obligatory for the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan alike to help him. "Let us do good to *all* men," Gal. 6, 10; and the very fact that St. Paul adds, "especially unto them who are of the household of faith," shows that also such as are not of the same faith with us are our neighbors whenever they are in need of our love. — More than this. The wounded man was a Jew. The Jews hated the Samaritans with most intense hatred. The wounded man was the Samaritan's enemy. But that does not alter the fact that, being in need, he was his neighbor. Thus Christ also says: "Love your *enemies,* bless them *that curse you,* do good to them *that hate you,* and pray for them *that despitefully use you and persecute you."* Matt. 5, 44. And St. Paul says: "Therefore, if thine *enemy* hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." Rom. 12, 20. — But St. Paul says we should do good "especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. 6, 10. Even infidels know that, among all men, the members of their own families are nearest to them, and therefore the foremost among those who are entitled to their love. (1 Tim. 5, 8.) We Christians also are one family before God in Christ. (Eph. 3, 15.) We are united by holier ties than the ties of family or of blood relationship; we are united by the ties of the blood of Christ. Hence, our brethren in the faith are nearest to us, and of all men they are the

first to whom our hearts should go forth. But while they are the foremost, they are not the only ones to whom we should show love. We should "do good unto all men."

We have seen, then, that our neighbor is *"every one who is in need of our love."* Qu. 37.

II. With What Kind of Love Should We Love Our Neighbor?

We should not love our neighbor as we love God; much less should we love him more than God, even though he were one of those who ought to be nearest and dearest to us among all men. For to do so would be a transgression of the First Commandment. (Matt. 10, 37.) "We should . . . fear . . . God above all things," with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our minds. (Matt. 22, 37.) — We should love our neighbors as ourselves, Matt. 22, 39. We all by nature love ourselves. The priest in the history of the good Samaritan loved himself; so did also the Levite. For this reason they passed by the wounded man. Now, the Bible does not command us to love ourselves. But it does command us to love our neighbor as we do by nature love ourselves. Our love of ourselves should be the standard for our love toward our neighbor. — This love of ourselves is really love; it is not pretense, sham, hypocrisy. So should we love our neighbor with real and sincere love. — Our love of self is shown in our actions; we do those things which we believe to be good for ourselves. So should our love toward our neighbor be shown in our acts; we should do what we believe to be for his good. We should do unto him as we would have others do unto us if we were in the same need with him. Matt. 12, 12. — Our love of self is constant love; we never grow weary of loving ourselves. So should we never grow weary in loving our neighbor and in showing such love in our deeds. — Such love of the neighbor is found in the good Samaritan.

Thus the Second Table of the Law demands of us *that we love every one who is in need of our love as we love ourselves.* Qu. 36. 37.

Conclusion. — Such love is required for the keeping of every one of the commandments of the Second Table. And we fall short of such love. Love of friends may be found with us; but even this is imperfect. Much less do we find perfect love of our enemies with ourselves. — Hence we can approach the Second Table only with the consciousness that every commandment will reveal anew to us the greatness of the need of a Savior.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

(Qu. 38—44.)

Introduction. — The First Table has shown us our duties toward God. We have learned from it that all power, honor, and obedience belong unto God. This is true in heaven. It is true also in earth. But upon earth God does not ordinarily rule directly and visibly. Here He has rather appointed men who should rule by His authority and in His stead, subject, of course, to His will. Of these we hear in the Fourth Commandment: —

"Thou Shalt Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother."

I. Who Is Meant by "Thy Father and Thy Mother"?

a. Not our natural father and mother only. For we find in the Bible that obedience and respect should be given to many persons besides our natural parents. And since the entire holy will of God is expressed in the Ten Commandments, and since no other commandment requires us to give such honor to men, it is evident that the expression "thy father and thy mother" includes all those to whom God would have us render obedience and respect.

b. Who are these?

1. The parents and all such as stand in their stead (grandparents, foster-parents, step-parents, parents-in-law, guardians). These are to govern the household and to provide for the bodily (Eph. 6, 4: "Bring them up") and spiritual (Eph. 6, 4: "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord") wants of the members of the family. They are to do this by God's command and in God's stead. They are clothed in the home with authority from God. Their will must be supreme in the household. Also servants and others in the home must respect their authority. (Eph. 6, 5—8. *Large Catechism,* 413, 143.)

2. All who are in authority in the State. The civil government is ordained of God (Rom. 13, 1); it is God's ordinance (Rom. 13, 2). The government is, by the will of God, entitled to obedience and honor, and may enforce its demand for honor and obedience even with the sword (Rom. 13, 4). Therefore, when Joseph was presented to the people as he rode in the second chariot of Pharaoh, the heralds cried, "Bow the knee," that is, Give honor to one clothed with authority, Gen. 41, 43. — In our country the people are the highest authority; and the officials, from the highest to the lowest, are their servants, clothed with authority to rule in

their name and according to their will. The officials are not "supreme," but they are "governors . . . that are sent" by the supreme authority "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." (1 Pet. 2, 14.) But being the chosen representatives of the supreme authority, they must demand that ye "submit yourselves" to them "for the Lord's sake." (1 Pet. 2, 13.) — Such as are placed over us in the State are included in the term "thy father and thy mother." (*Large Catechism,* 414, 150.)

3. Again, in 2 Kings 2, 12 we read that Elisha called Elijah his father. Elijah was Elisha's teacher. Thus teachers are called fathers. In instructing us — in secular or in spiritual knowledge — they are performing the duty which God has imposed upon the parents, and hence have the authority, and the title to the obedience and respect which God has given to the parents in the performance of this duty. — Thus those who are placed over us in the school are included in the term "thy father and thy mother."

4. Furthermore, in 1 Cor. 4, 15 Paul calls himself the father of the Christians in Corinth; "for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel." He is their father because he has taught them the Word of God. Such as teach and preach the Word of God, and all who "watch for your souls" are "over you in the Lord." (Heb. 13, 17.) And though they can demand obedience only when they speak the Word of God, they should at all times be counted "worthy of double honor" (1 Tim. 5, 17) "for their work's sake" (1 Thess. 5, 13; *Large Catechism,* 416, 161). — Thus all who are placed over us in the church are included in the term "thy father and thy mother."

5. Finally, God would have us honor all whom He Himself has dignified by granting them a long life (Lev. 19, 32). Therefore St. Paul calls the aged men "fathers" (Acts 22, 1) and an aged woman his "mother" (Rom. 16, 13), and would have even young Timothy, who as pastor was himself "worthy of double honor," approach the aged men and women in his congregation as fathers and mothers (1 Tim. 5, 1. 2). (A special exhortation unto respect for old age is indispensable in our days.) — Hence, the aged are also included in the term "thy father and thy mother."

Thus the term "thy father and thy mother" in the Fourth Commandment includes *"father and mother and all those who, according to God's ordinance, are placed over us in home, state, school, and church,"* Qu. 40, *and the aged.*

The explanation of the Fourth Commandment, therefore,

describes "thy father and thy mother" as "parents and masters," the word "parents" designating "father and mother" in the strict sense of the term, and the word "masters" all others whom God has placed over us.

II. The Prohibition of the Fourth Commandment.

a. In demanding, "Thou shalt honor," this commandment forbids us to dishonor, or despise, in thought, word, or deed. The explanation of the Fourth Commandment, therefore, properly expresses the prohibition by saying: "We should . . . not despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger." Qu. 41.

1. "We should . . . not despise our parents and masters." We despise them if we do not esteem them as we should. God has told us how we should esteem them. He has placed them over us; He has clothed them with authority to rule in His stead in those things in which He has placed them over us. He has enjoined respect for them. This, then, is their dignity that they are God's representatives, entitled to obedience and respect at our hands. We despise them if we do not look upon them as God's representatives; we despise them if we do not look upon their will as God's will with respect to us. Hence, we despise our parents and masters *"by not respecting their dignity and will."* Qu. 42.

2. "We should . . . not . . . provoke them to anger." To despise them is a sin of the heart, in itself hidden from the observation of man. To provoke them to anger is a sin of words or actions which are the result of the contempt of the heart, and which provoke to anger because they are perceived by our parents and masters. For if in our hearts we do not esteem them highly, we will readily show our contempt by our conduct, in our manners, in our words, and in acts of disobedience. Thus Ham did not, in his heart, truly respect his father, and he dishonored him in word and deed. (Gen. 9, 20—22.) The sons of Eli were wicked, honoring neither God nor their father, 1 Sam. 2, 12. And when their father rebuked them for their evil deeds, "they hearkened not unto the voice of their father." (1 Sam. 2, 22—25.) Absalom did not regard his father and king as God's representative. As a result of such contempt he started a rebellion, 2 Sam. 15, 1—12. The children of Bethel did not regard Elisha as entitled to honor by the will of God, although they could see that he was an elderly man, and probably also knew that he was a prophet of the Lord. And they showed this lack of respect by mocking him, 2 Kings 2, 23. — The actions whereby

we show disregard for the dignity and will of those whom God has placed over us provoke them to anger, fill them with sadness, displeasure, and wrath. And the wrath of parents and masters at such disrespect and disobedience is not sinful. On the contrary, it is righteous wrath, it is anger which God demands. God punished Eli because he was not angry with his sons. (1 Sam. 3, 11—14.) On the other hand, when Noah cursed Ham, and when Elisha cursed the children of Bethel, the Lord was pleased with their wrath and fulfilled the words which they spoke. They did not sin when they were angry; the sin was with those who provoked them to anger.

Thus, to provoke our parents and masters to anger is to arouse their *"just wrath by disobedience or any kind of wickedness."* Qu. 42.

b. To despise our parents and masters and to provoke them to anger is a sin.

1. This sin God punishes severely. Prov. 30, 17. He tells us that one who mocks and disobeys ("despises to obey," thinks it more worthy or manly not to obey) father and mother is deserving not merely of death, but of a most shameful death, a death without burial. Disobedience to the government has even now the sentence of damnation, Rom. 13, 2. — Examples of God's punishment upon disrespect and disobedience to parents and masters are found in Ham and his equally ungodly son Canaan, whose descendants are "servants of servants" to the present day, even though slavery has been abolished; likewise in Eli's sons, who were both slain in one day (1 Sam. 2, 34); in Absalom, who, notwithstanding David's efforts in his behalf (2 Sam. 18, 5), died a shameful death (vv. 9. 14. 15. 17); and in the children of Bethel, forty-two of whom were torn by two she-bears, 2 Kings 2, 24.

2. Neither is there any excuse for disrespect or disobedience to be found in the fact that parents and masters are themselves doing what is wrong. Thus servants are commanded to be subject to their masters not only when these are "good and gentle," as masters should be, but also when they are "froward," that is, irritable, unreasonable, disagreeable. 1 Pet. 2, 18. The Christians at Rome were warned that if they resist the power they shall receive unto themselves damnation, Rom. 13, 2, even though Nero was at that very time persecuting them with torture and with the sword. Ham and his descendants were punished, notwithstanding the fact that Noah had, by his drunkenness, given occasion

to Ham to sin (Gen. 9, 21). And the sinful leniency of Eli did not save his sons from death.

Thus, according to the commandment, "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother," *"we should . . . not despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger."* Qu. 41.

III. The Command of the Fourth Commandment.

The text of the Fourth Commandment, "Thou shalt honor," etc., contains a command to which is attached a promise.

a. The command, "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother," is stated more explicitly in the explanation in the words: "We should . . . give them honor, serve and obey them, and hold them in love and esteem." Qu. 43. — We should

1. "Give honor" to our parents and masters. God has bestowed upon them greater honor than we can give. For He has made them His representatives to govern us, and to rule over us. The greatest honor which we can now give them consists in this that we, with our hearts, recognize and acknowledge them to be what God has made them unto us, *viz.,* His representatives, and keep ever present to our minds this dignity wherewith God has thus endued them. God demands that we do this. Speaking of our parents in the strict sense, St. Paul says: "Honor thy father and mother," Eph. 6, 2. And this we should do not only while we are young and our parents are at their best, physically and mentally. We are commanded: "Despise not thy mother when she is old," Prov. 23, 22. With regard to those who preach and teach unto us the Word of God, we are admonished to "let them be counted worthy of double honor" (1 Tim. 5, 17). The government should be unto us the powers "ordained of God," Rom. 13, 1. And with regard to the aged, God commands us to "honor the face of the old man," and, in evidence of such respect at heart, to "rise up before the hoary head," Lev. 19, 32. — An example of such as gave honor to their parents is Joseph, who, though ruler of Egypt, was not ashamed to go forth to meet his aged father and to fall upon his neck, nor to acknowledge and to present him before Pharaoh as his father, whom he loved and esteemed, Gen. 46. 47. Likewise Solomon, who showed his mother greater honor than he ever showed another person, rising from his throne, bowing before her, and giving her the seat of honor, 1 Kings 2, 19. David also refused to slay Saul because he regarded him as "the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 24, 1—8; 26, 5—12).

And Paul would respect the dignity of the high priest even when he suffered wrong at the high priest's hands (Acts 23, 1—5).

Thus we "give honor" to our parents and masters *"when we truly regard them as God's representatives."* Qu. 44.

2. "We should . . . serve . . . them." To serve them is to do that which benefits them, or which they would desire, or be pleased, to have done. Such service should not be rendered by compulsion, but from the heart. We should, therefore, not wait until it is demanded, but do it freely, of our own accord, whenever opportunity offers. God demands this. In 1 Tim. 5, 4 St. Paul says that the children or nephews of widows should "learn first to show piety at home"; and as an evidence of such piety he mentions their readiness "to requite their parents," to repay their parents, to do by them when they are in need as the parents have done by the children when these were helpless. This includes that they do it without command and with all their heart. — He that is taught in the Word should communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things; not because it is demanded by men, but freely, because God asks it. (Gal. 6, 6. 7.) — We should pay to the government the tribute which it needs to be able to carry on its work; we should not do this by compulsion, but freely, because the government is the minister of God. (Rom. 13, 6.) Of course, we should freely serve the government also in every other way. — Joseph is an example of one who served his father according to the Fourth Commandment; he provided for him without command or request from his father, Gen. 47, 11. 12. — Ruth would not forsake her mother-in-law, even when the latter urged her to do so, but remained with her to serve her in her old age, Ruth 1, 16. 17. Timothy unselfishly served Paul in the work of the Gospel (Phil. 3, 19—22). And the Philippians of their own accord sent money to Paul, especially when he was in prison (Phil. 4, 14—18).

Thus, "to serve" our parents and masters is *"of our own accord to do for them what we can."* Qu. 44.

3. "We should . . . obey them." To obey them is to do what they demand. God has placed them over us for that very purpose that they should govern and rule over us. If, therefore, in the execution of their task, they issue a command, it is the will of God that we should obey. Hence, obedience to our parents and masters is obedience to God. On the other hand, since the obedience which we render unto our parents and masters is to be obedience rendered unto God,

it is not sufficient if we merely outwardly obey their commands. God looks upon the heart and demands obedience from the heart. Therefore, we are to do the commands of our parents and masters gladly, esteeming it a privilege rather than a burden that we may do them. — Such obedience unto our parents is demanded of us by God in Prov. 23, 22 and in Col. 3, 20. Heb. 13, 17 enjoins obedience to all who "watch for your souls," that is, all pastors and teachers of the Word when they tell us the will of God. And Rom. 13, 1 commands every soul to be subject to the "higher powers," to the civil government. — A beautiful example of willing obedience to parents is found in Jesus Himself, who, though the Lord of all things, willingly and of His own choice was subject unto His parents, Luke 2, 51. — Of obedience to parents, St. Paul says that it is "well pleasing unto the Lord," Col. 3, 20. (Large Catechism, 407, 115—408, 116.) The same is true also of obedience to our masters, as is evident from the fact that God asks such obedience. — There is only one case in which obedience to our parents and masters cannot please God, *viz.,* if they ask something which is contrary to His will. God has given them no right to do that. In that case we must not obey. For to obey them would be disobedience to God. And "we ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5, 29.

Thus we honor our parents and masters in accordance with the demands of the Fourth Commandment *"when we . . . obey them in all things in which God has placed them over us."* Qu. 44.

4. "We should . . . hold them in love and esteem." To hold them in love and esteem is to prize them highly. This we have ample reason to do. For, as we have seen, our parents and masters hold their positions by virtue of the will of God. He has ordained them; He has given them to us. If, then, God has given them unto us, they are good gifts; for such only come from the hand of God. Our parents and masters, therefore, are precious gifts of God. And through them God bestows upon us many advantages for time and for eternity.

Thus we hold our parents and masters in love and esteem *"when we . . . esteem them as a precious gift of God."* Qu. 44.

We have now seen that the words, "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother," require that *"we should give unto our parents and masters honor, serve and obey them, and hold them in love and esteem."* Qu. 43.

b. The promise attached to this command is, "That it may

be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." God would encourage every one to use all diligence to keep this commandment. For this reason He adds this special promise of lifelong reward, yea, the promise of a long life that He may the more bless those who keep this commandment. (*Large Catechism,* 416, 164. 165.) — Of the fulfilment of this promise we have many examples. The blessing which Noah pronounced upon Shem and Japheth (Gen. 9, 26. 27) is fulfilled unto the present day. The children of Shem became mighty and prosperous, and from them came Christ according to the flesh. And when they, by their sins, finally forfeited the favor of God, Japheth "dwelled in the tents of Shem." The people who now have the Word of God, and the nations which are mighty upon the earth to-day, are the children of Japheth. — Joseph lived in prosperity and honor unto a good old age. — Ruth became one of the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh, etc. And if at times God seems to deal otherwise with good and obedient children, it is because He finds that, in their particular case, sorrow and an early death will be a greater blessing than prosperity and a long life. But they shall still have their reward of grace in glory. (Rev. 14, 13.)

(Here might follow, what is not contained in Schwan's *Short Exposition of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism,* and what would still be exceedingly profitable at the present time, *viz.,* a discussion of the duties of parents and masters after the manner of Luther's *Large Catechism,* 417, 167—418, 178.)

Conclusion. — We are always in the presence of "parents and masters." We have daily opportunity to "honor father and mother." But with the best endeavors on our part we constantly fall short, if not by words and deeds, yet in our hearts. Hence, again, we find cause to seek forgiveness and daily the more zealously to strive for fuller obedience to the will of God.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

(Qu. 45—48.)

Introduction. — "We have now completed the discussion of both spiritual and temporal government, that is, divine and paternal authority and obedience. But here we go forth from our own house to our neighbor's to learn how we should live with respect to one another, every one for himself toward his neighbor." (*Large Catechism,* 419, 180.) Among the earthly benefits protected by the Law, *viz.,* our lives, our homes, our property, and our honor, our lives are mentioned

first; for unless we are protected in our lives, we could not be secure in the enjoyment of any other earthly benefit. — Our lives are protected by the Fifth Commandment: —

"Thou Shalt Not Kill."

I. What Killing Is Not Prohibited?

a. The words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," are the sum of the entire Second Table of the Law and, hence, include also the Fifth Commandment. This commandment is given for the protection of man only. It has no reference to the killing of animals. This appears also from Gen. 9, 1—3. God has given all beasts, fishes, and fowls into the hand of man. Certainly, man should not kill and destroy the creatures of God simply for the pleasure of killing and destroying. Least of all should he torture them unnecessarily in taking their lives. (Prov. 12, 10.) But they are delivered into his hands that he may use them for his advantage (Gen. 9, 2); he may kill them with perfect propriety, if, alive, they injure him, or if, dead, they benefit him, for instance, as food. (Gen. 9, 3).

b. This commandment applies to the killing of man only. Man is not to be killed. This rule has been established by God Himself. He who has given the commandment has the right also to make exceptions thereto. He has done so. He has given the sword to the government. (Rom. 13, 4.) In doing this, He intended that the government should use the sword. The sword is used to slay. Thus it is the will of God that the government should make use of the power to take human life. — The government is to use this power only as a "revenger," as a punisher, "to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Thus, if some one unlawfully sheds man's blood, kills another, his blood also should be shed by man, by those who have the command to punish crime. Gen. 9, 6; Matt. 26, 52. — The government may take human life not only in the case of the murderer, but also for other causes. Thus in the Old Testament, by God's command, "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death." (Lev. 24, 16.) The sin of adultery also was to be punished with death. (Lev. 20, 10.) The government may impose the death-sentence upon crimes as it finds necessary for the welfare of the people. (Of course, if the government may impose the death-sentence, it has the right also to impose the lesser punishments, such as fines and imprisonment.) — The government should use this power against the evil-doer, in order that the law-abiding citizen

may be protected. (Rom. 13, 3; 1 Tim. 2, 2.) — The government should protect its citizens not only against evil-doers within the country, but also against such as are without, yea, against whole nations which would wrong its citizens. When the government uses the sword against a nation, such action constitutes war. Thus, righteous wars, wars for the protection of the citizens of the country, are not only lawful, but even demanded of the government by God. Also in carrying on a righteous war, the government is "the minister of God." And to serve the government in war as a soldier, and thus to take life, is to serve the minister of God. To be a soldier in a just war is not sinful; being a service unto God's minister, it is a service unto God. (John the Baptist's approval of the soldier's calling, Luke 3, 14.) — But in order to be a service unto God, such taking of life, even in war, must be in the service of the government. Whoever would use the sword without the government's commission would be a plain murderer. — Finally, the government cannot always be present when a citizen's life is threatened by an evil-doer. In that case it gives the citizen the right of self-protection. In other words, it takes him whose life is threatened into its service to stay the hand of the intended murderer. In order to protect his own life, a citizen may find it necessary to take the life of his assailant. The government grants him the authority to do this; he thereby becomes an agent, a servant, of the government. Also in the Old Testament, in the civil law which was given by God Himself, this right was granted (Ex. 22, 2). Of course, a Christian will be very careful to make use of this authority only in case of extreme necessity.

Thus the right to take human life is granted to the government and to those who, in the service of the government, act as soldiers in war, or in self-defense. "Therefore God and government are not included in this commandment, nor the power which they have to kill. For God has delegated His authority to governments to punish evil-doers. . . . Therefore this prohibition pertains to individuals and not to government." (*Large Catechism,* 419, 179. 180.)

II. The Prohibition of the Fifth Commandment. Qu. 47.

a. "Thou shalt not kill," says the Fifth Commandment. To kill, in its grossest sense, is actually to destroy life. Thus did Cain, who rose up against his brother Abel and slew him, Gen. 4, 8. — David also committed this sin. He commanded that Uriah should be placed "in the forefront of the hottest battle," and that then his comrades should retire,

leaving him at the mercy of the enemy. He did this with the intention "that he may be smitten and die," 2 Sam. 11, 15. He did not in person slay Uriah; but he did that whereby Uriah's life might, and probably would, be destroyed. He was thus the cause of Uriah's death, and hence the prophet said to him: "*Thou* hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, . . . and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon." (1 Sam. 12, 9.) True, David was king, the supreme officer of the government. As such he had received the sword from God. But he did not use it, in this case, to "execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." This was unlawful taking of life. — To take life unlawfully is called murder, and it is a sin which God would have punished in the severest manner. A murderer should be put to death, Gen. 9, 6; Matt. 26, 52. This latter passage shows also that such punishment is not to be inflicted by any one who chooses to do so. For it says: "All that *take* the sword shall perish by the sword," not those to whom God has *given* the sword, but they that *take* it by their own authority. Lynching, therefore, is always simple murder according to God's Word, even though the person who is lynched is worthy of death. For the government alone is the authority to whom God has *given* the sword and of whom God demands that it put the murderer to death. Rom. 13, 4. — Murder of one's self, or suicide, is, of course, also forbidden by the Fifth Commandment. Suicide is so unnatural a crime that, with one who has the use of his senses, it can be explained only by the fact that he has cast aside all confidence in God's help and all obedience to God's will, that in cowardly fear of the present or expected earthly suffering, and in most abject surrender to such cowardly fear, he blindly plunges into eternity, not considering that he is plunging into hell-fire.

We have thus seen that the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," demands that "we should do . . . nothing whereby" human "life may be destroyed." Qu. 47.

b. The explanation of the Fifth Commandment, furthermore, demands that "we should not hurt . . . our neighbor in his body." Qu. 46. Not every bodily injury actually results in death. But while not killing immediately, it may result in shortening our neighbor's life, in an earlier death; and it always causes suffering and is forbidden in the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." — Thus the thieves wounded the man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and departed, leaving him half dead. (Luke 10, 30.) And Peter brought upon himself the sharp rebuke of Christ when he cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Matt. 26, 51. 52.

Though Peter had not actually killed the servant, he had "hurt . . . him in his body." Qu. 47.

c. But the Fifth Commandment requires not only that we do not "hurt" our neighbor, but also that we do not "harm" him in his body. It forbids us to destroy, as far as we are concerned, the neighbor's enjoyment of his bodily life, or to embitter his life. This is done by all manner of malicious acts or words. — The Egyptians under Pharaoh did this unto the children of Israel. For "they made their lives bitter with hard bondage." (Ex. 1, 14.) The brethren of Joseph embittered the life of Jacob, so that he complained, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Gen. 37, 31—34. The wives of Esau so conducted themselves that Rebekah cried out, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth." (Gen. 27, 46.) And malicious words were used by the enemies of the prophet Jeremiah to his hurt. Jer. 18, 18. — To embitter the life of our neighbor is a sin against the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." This is seen from Matt. 5, 21. 22. The word "Raca" means "vain, empty-handed, good-for-nothing." He who calls his brother "Raca" or "Fool" is deserving of the same treatment as a murderer, here in time to be summoned before the council which has the power to inflict capital punishment, and hereafter to be cast into hell-fire.

Hence, the Fifth Commandment requires that we should *"not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body,"* that is, *"do or say nothing whereby his life may be destroyed, shortened, or embittered."* Qu. 47.

d. However, the Fifth Commandment judges not the words and acts only. It also searches the hearts. For all sins have their origin in the heart of man. Matt. 15, 19. Thus, with Cain we first find envy because Abel's offering pleased the Lord while his own was rejected. From this envy sprang wrath, and this wrath began to change his countenance. Though warned of God, he continued in his anger, which became hatred. And his hatred finally vented itself in the murder of Abel. (Gen. 4, 4—8.) — The sin of Joseph's brethren also had its origin in envy at their father's greater love for Joseph. They were filled with wrath, which, being harbored, became hatred. This wrath and hatred manifested itself in their demeanor. "They could not speak peaceably unto him." (Gen. 37, 4.) And presently they were ready to kill him. (Gen. 37, 18.) — Since, then, the heart is the source of all sin, the Law demands a clean heart in all things. And it condemns anger and hatred of the heart as murder. "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall

be in danger of the judgment." Matt. 5, 22. "Anger without a cause" is anger which one has no right to harbor, as distinguished from righteous wrath, of which we have heard in the Fourth Commandment. One who harbors "anger without a cause" shall be in danger of the judgment, that is, he is on the same plane with the murderer, of whom also it was said that he "shall be in danger of the judgment," v. 21. — Again, we are told that, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," a "manslayer" (Greek, *anthropoktonos*). Therefore, also the evil thoughts which proceed out of the heart are not called "thoughts of murder," etc., but they are called "murder," etc. Hence, the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," demands also that we should "bear no anger or hatred against" our neighbor "in our hearts." Qu. 47.

e. For the sins against the Fifth Commandment no sufficient excuse can be found. Even if our neighbor has sinned against us ever so grievously, we are not privileged to do evil unto him. To repay evil with evil is called "avenging one's self." And the Bible says, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves," Rom. 12, 19. There shall indeed be vengeance for every wrong we suffer. But "vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." And since this is His affair, we should "give place unto wrath," the wrath of God, lest, as it comes upon the evil-doer, it consume us together with him.

We have seen that the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," demands *"that we should not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body; that is, we should do or say nothing whereby his life may be destroyed, shortened, or embittered, and bear no anger or hatred against him in our hearts."* Qu. 47.

III. The Command of the Fifth Commandment.

a. The words, "Thou shalt not kill," demand not only that we abstain from doing that which may "hurt or harm our neighbor in his body," but also that we do what may turn hurt or harm away from him. (*Large Catechism,* 421, 189. 190), that we may "help and befriend him in every bodily need." Qu. 48. This is demanded by God in Is. 58, 7: "Is it not to deal," etc.? The words "Is it not" refer to the question in v. 6: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen, wherewith I am pleased?" To feed the hungry, etc., is a truly God-pleasing fast, wherewith God is better pleased than with all the outward acts of worship of the Jews. And the reason why we should show such love to the neighbor is not the fact that he is deserving, or a godly man, or that he suffers

want without fault of his. "Hide not thyself from thine own flesh." Whoever is our own flesh, whoever is our fellowman, a human being, should receive aid at our hands when he is in need, whether he is "worthy" of such aid or not. — Therefore, our enemy should find us just as ready to help him as our friend, Rom. 12, 20. "In so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head," shalt force upon him the painful consciousness of the wickedness of the evil which he has done to you. Thereby he may be led to repentance and become your coheir of heaven, thus being delivered by your act from temporal need and from eternal torment. This should be the purpose which you should have in view. (To show our enemy kindness for the purpose of causing him pain, of humiliating him, is, of course, so far from being kindness that it is rather evidence of the most vicious and hypocritical hatred imaginable.) — Abraham is an example of one who helps and befriends his neighbor in bodily need. When Chedorlaomer and his allies had carried off Lot and all that he had, Abraham did not hesitate to wage war against an overwhelmingly superior force, thus risking his possessions and his life to deliver Lot, Gen. 14, 12—16. David prevented Abishai from destroying Saul, although Saul was David's enemy, and at that very time seeking to kill him. 1 Sam. 26, 1—12. The good Samaritan befriended the man who had fallen among thieves; not only did he bring him to a place of safety, but he also provided for him as though he had been his dearest friend, while in reality he was his enemy, Luke 10, 33—35. — With such works our Savior is well pleased; He expects and demands them. If we fail to do them, He will consider it as though we had forsaken Him when He was in need. If we do them, He will consider them as having been done unto Him, and will so publish it before the assembled hosts of heaven, earth, and hell on Judgment Day, Matt. 25, 31—46. (*Large Catechism,* 421, 191. 192.)

b. But helping and befriending our neighbor should not be merely an outward act. On the contrary, our outward act should be the fruit and product of mercy and love of the heart. Of the good Samaritan it is said that he "showed mercy" unto the wounded man (Luke 10, 37), that is, the outward assistance which he rendered was but the manifestation of the spirit of loving compassion which filled his heart. And in the Beatitudes, Matt. 5, 5. 7. 9, Jesus pronounces those blessed who are meek (with cheerful kindness shutting out bitterness and selfish resentment), the

merciful (who are moved with compassion by another's misery), and the peacemakers (who are ready to establish peace between themselves and others, — to this end readily seeking the forgiveness of him whom they have made their "adversary" by wronging him, Matt. 5, 25, — and who have pleasure also in bringing about peace between others).

Conclusion. — Before the demands of this commandment all our boast of strength to fulfil the Law must quickly vanish, and we must confess our sin and our inability to do the will of God. Our only hope and source of strength must be found in Him who died for us when we were His enemies.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

(Qu. 49—55.)

(Prefatory Remarks. — The discussion of the Sixth Commandment offers greater difficulties than that of any other, owing to the fact that this commandment touches upon the sexual relations and the sexual sins of the human race. In treating this delicate subject, the catechist will find it necessary to be especially careful and watchful with regard to his personal bearing as well as with regard to the manner in which he treats the subject-matter of the commandment.

His personal bearing must be solemn and sanctified, shutting off from the very outset any levity even in the thoughts of his pupils, impressing them rather with the fact that they are here treading upon ground upon which mortals can enter only with fear and trembling. Yet, prudish conduct must be shunned. Let the teacher be filled with the consciousness of the presence of God and with sincere solicitude for the welfare of the souls entrusted to his care, and his conduct will be such as the occasion demands.

In discussing the subject-matter, it would be a delusion to presuppose complete ignorance on the part of the pupils of sins against this commandment. And it is the catechist's solemn duty, the responsibility of which he dare not shirk, to speak in such a way as to fill the minds and hearts of his pupils with sincere abhorrence for immorality and impurity in every form. To clothe his speech in words and expressions which will not be understood by such pupils as have knowledge of sins against this commandment would be unpardonable neglect of duty. But while speaking in such a way as to be understood by those who have knowledge of various forms of sin against this commandment, he must be careful lest his words instruct in, or familiarize with, vice. Blunt description — even though detail be avoided — of sins of immorality is worse than criminal. The catechist will, therefore, strive to speak in such manner as to be understood by those who are informed, while the rest do not receive information from him, but yet are impressed with the hideousness of all uncleanness. In order to accomplish this, it will be necessary at times to cease all

efforts of seeking to develop truths by means of questions and answers, and rather to teach by means of direct statements in carefully chosen words.

The proper preparation for the discussion of this commandment will require not only careful choice of words, but, above all, *sincere and fervent prayer for guidance and directions from on high.*

The material which we offer for the discussion of this commandment is sufficiently complete to meet all requirements of well-established members of Christian congregations in judging such questions concerning marriage, etc., as may arise in later life. The catechist will, of course, exercise his judgment in using only as much of this material as the needs of his pupils require.)

Introduction. — In the Fifth Commandment God has offered unto us that protection which is the first prerequisite for earthly well-being and happiness, the protection of our own body and life. In the Sixth Commandment He offers protection to our homes. Well-ordered human society is founded upon the home, and must suffer decay and collapse if the home is corrupted. But the foundation of the home is the married estate. The Sixth Commandment, therefore, would guard the sanctity of the married estate against all corruption or desecration at the hands of both, those within and those without this estate. For such corruption and desecration of every kind is forbidden in the words, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." In order, then, to fully understand the precepts of this commandment, we must speak of

I. The Married Estate.

a. What is marriage?

1. The married estate, whose sanctity is to be protected by the Sixth Commandment, was instituted in the garden of Eden. We read the history of its institution in Gen. 2, 18—24. Having first created the man, God created also the woman, and brought her unto the man that she should be his wife. Marriage, therefore, is the union of a man with a woman as with his wife. — We note especially also that at the institution of marriage there was only one man, Adam, and one woman, Eve. That only two were united with each other by the marital bond in the beginning was not a mere matter of accident. It was the will of God then, and it has been the will of God ever since that time, that no marriage should include more than two persons. Gen. 2, 24: "Therefore shall a man" (singular, one man) . . . "cleave unto his" (this one man's) "wife" (singular, one wife only); "and they" (this one man and his one wife) "shall be one flesh." Therefore Christ quotes these words according to the mani-

fest will of God: "And *they twain* shall be one flesh" (Mark 10, 8). And from these words Christ argues that it is contrary to the will of God even that a man should put away one wife and marry another, or that a woman should leave one husband and marry another. (Mark 10, 11. 12.) This being the case, it is certainly not permissible for any one to have two wives or two husbands *at the same time.* For a man to have more than one wife (polygamy), or for a woman to have more than one husband (polygamy, also called polyandry) is contrary to the Law of God. — Marriage, therefore, is *the union of one man and one woman as husband and wife.*

2. This union is to be a very close, a very intimate union. It is the most intimate union possible between two human beings. When God had brought the woman unto the man, "God blessed them and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1, 28). God wanted them to "be fruitful and multiply," that is, become the parents of children. This is the purpose for which marriage has been instituted, that families of children might be reared. This living together of two persons for the purpose of rearing children is in the Bible called "being one flesh." (Gen. 2, 24.) Such living together of persons who are not married to each other is a sin against the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." But for persons who are married to each other it is a holy service unto God. (Gen. 1, 28; 2, 24; Mark 10, 8.) — Marriage, therefore, is *the union of one man and one wife unto one flesh.*

3. This intimate union between husband and wife is not man's institution or man's invention. We read that God brought Eve unto Adam to be his wife, Gen. 2, 22. And God brought her unto him in order that, as husband and wife, they should become one flesh (Gen. 1, 28; 2, 24; Mark 10, 8). God Himself, therefore, has instituted marriage. And whenever, since that time, any one man and one woman lawfully become husband and wife, God is present and joins them together in wedlock. They may not see Him; they may not think of Him, nor even believe that there is a God; but He is present nevertheless and joins them together. For of all those who enter wedlock Jesus says that "God hath joined" them "together," Matt. 19, 6. — Hence marriage is *the union of one man and one wife unto one flesh, instituted by God.*

4. Since God Himself has instituted marriage, and since He Himself joins together all those who now enter the married estate lawfully, no one has a right to disrupt the marital bond but God. "What, therefore, God hath joined together

let not man put asunder," Matt. 19, 6. God puts them asunder, separates them, by the death of the husband or of the wife. And whenever either of the two has died, the other is thereby freed from the marriage bond, and therefore at liberty, if he or she so wills, to marry another (Rom. 7, 2. 3). But until God separates them by death, the marriage-vow should stand inviolate according to God's plan. Those who marry each other enter a lifelong union. — Hence marriage is *the lifelong union of one man and one wife unto one flesh, instituted by God.* Qu. 51.

b. How is the marriage-bond formed?

1. The Bible tells us that Mary, the mother of Jesus, "was espoused to Joseph," that is, was engaged to be married to Joseph. They had not yet "come together"; they had not yet begun to live together as husband and wife (Matt. 1, 18), for which reason also Mary is called a "virgin" (Matt. 1, 23), a chaste unmarried woman. But though they were only engaged to be married, Joseph is called "her husband" (Matt. 1, 19); and the angel, speaking to Joseph, calls Mary "thy wife" (Matt. 1, 20). Thus those who are engaged to be married, those who are betrothed to each other, are looked upon by the Bible as being already husband and wife. The betrothal, the engagement to be married, establishes the marriage-bond, not the marriage-ceremony. The marriage-ceremony is nowhere demanded by the Bible, nor does the Bible tell us of any instance in which there was performed what we now call "marriage-ceremony." All that it tells us is that certain festivities were observed when betrothed people were about to begin to live together as husband and wife. — But while the Bible does not demand a marriage-ceremony, good custom and decency now do demand it. And it would be giving grave offense for Christians to omit it. (Moreover, the tendency of civil legislation in our country is to refuse any longer to recognize "common-law marriages," but to demand a formal ceremony under license from the State.) And Christians will want such ceremony to be sanctified with the Word of God and prayer, and, therefore, to be performed by the pastor of their church. — Thus marriage is *entered into by betrothal.* Qu. 51.

2. Betrothal (engagement) is the promise which a man and a woman who are not otherwise bound in marriage make to each other to become, and to live together as, husband and wife. Of course, before such promise is made, they should make sure that they have a right to make it.

aa. They have no right to make such promise if their parents withhold their approval. The Bible commands:

"Children, obey your parents in *all* things," Col. 3, 20. — Filial gratitude to the parents also demands that children should not marry any one against their parents' will. For until the children marry, the parents occupy the first place in their affections. When they marry, however, another person enters into relations of still closer and more intimate affection toward, and union with, them (Gen. 2, 24). After the parents have lovingly fed and clothed them, and cared for, and watched, and wept, and prayed over them for so many years, it is not right that the children should cast them out of the highest place in their affections without even giving them an opportunity to say one word as to who should henceforth occupy that place, more especially as this person is, at the same time, to be unto them as a child. Even the State recognizes this right of the parents until the majority of the child is reached. But Christian children will remember that they can never outgrow the demands of the Bible. — Thus also all godly children of whom the Bible tells us have, whenever possible, sought their parents' advice and consent before betrothal, for instance, Isaac (Gen. 24, 4—8) and Samson (Judg. 14, 1—10). Elopements, therefore, are always dishonorable, and they are especially disgraceful in the case of such as bear the Christian name. — It is to be remembered, however, that while children should ask their parents' consent to their choice, parents cannot force their own choice upon the children, but these must make the marriage-vow of their own free will. (Rebekah, Gen. 24, 57. 58.) A promise of marriage under duress (compulsion) is no promise. — Again, while parents may forbid their children to marry a certain person, they cannot forbid marriage unto them absolutely. If parents do this, or if it becomes evident that they object to their children's choice only because they would prevent every marriage on their part, children may marry nevertheless; but in order to avoid unnecessary public offense, they should consult their pastor with regard to proper procedure.

bb. The promise to marry may also be improper because of the relationship (consanguinity, that is, blood relationship, or affinity, that is, relationship through marriage) existing between the two persons in question. Degrees of relationship within which marriage is prohibited are the first two. The Bible forbids every one to marry "any that is of kin" (Lev. 18, 6), or, as the original reads, "the flesh of his flesh." One's "flesh" are those who would naturally at some time of life live under the same roof with him, as, father and mother, brother and sister, son and daughter, husband and wife (the

husband being the wife's and the wife the husband's flesh because they are married). The prohibition of marriage extends also to all who are the "flesh" of these, who are within the first degree of relationship with these, as, stepfather and stepmother, uncle and aunt by consanguinity, nephew and niece by consanguinity, brother-in-law and sister-in-law. In addition, the Bible forbids marriage with one's aunt by affinity.

If neither of these reasons (lack of consent of parents or prohibited degree of relationship) exist to the contrary, the betrothal is rightful and constitutes a marriage-bond. To such as are rightfully engaged to be married applies the word of Christ that God hath joined them together, Matt. 19, 6.

We have thus seen that marriage is *"the lifelong union of man and wife unto one flesh, instituted by God and entered into by rightful betrothal."* Qu. 51.

c. Marriage, according to the Bible, is a holy gift of God.

1. It is holy. For God Himself has instituted it. To deny its holiness is to accuse God of having deliberately led man from the state of greater to a state of lesser holiness. — Furthermore, God has instituted marriage when man was yet pure and holy. And it was His will that man should continue in such state of perfect holiness also while enjoying the blessings and performing the duties of married life. Therefore, marriage is an estate the enjoyment of which does not in any way interfere with man's holy conversation before God. Such as enter the married estate do not thereby lose any God-given opportunity for holiness, but rather receive added opportunity of walking before God in an estate which God Himself has instituted and blessed.

2. Marriage is not only holy; it is also a special gift of the love of God toward man. Amid all the bliss and happiness of paradise, man received this gift from the hand of God, that God might thus add to his already blessed state one more source of happiness (Gen. 1, 18). And it is a special favor at the hands of God that, when man sinned and thus forfeited the kindness of God, the Lord did not take the married estate from him, but still permitted him to keep it. True, through sin, sorrow and corruption have entered into the world. And also the married estate has received its burdens and its bitterness, as has the whole life of man. But still it is true also that the married estate is among the greatest earthly blessings which are given to man in this sin-filled world.

Marriage, being holy and a gift of the love of God, may

justly and properly be sought and desired by man. And Christian young people may think of the day when the Lord may grant them also the opportunity to enter upon this estate. And they should pray that the Lord may then guide them aright, so that their marriage may indeed be kept holy and may be a source of true happiness and blessedness. Yea, what a blessed thing it would be if all young people would make the prospects of future marriage a matter of prayer before their God! There would be less sickly-sentimental, unhealthy, novel-style delirium connected with their entering upon this holy estate; there would be less ungodliness connected with it; there would be fewer homes filled with bitterness and cursing; there would be more homes filled with the fear of God and the praises of the Most High.

One point needs special emphasis at the present time. It is not, strictly speaking, a sin for a Christian to marry an unbeliever, or one who is not of the same faith with him. But it is a very dangerous thing to do. History and statistics show that one of the most fruitful sources of ungodliness among the younger generation is to be found in the fact that the parents are not united in the faith. Such mixed marriages were the cause of the spread of unbelief which called forth God's vengeance in the Flood. (Gen. 6, 1—5.) And they have, in general, been productive of the same results ever since that time. — As you prize your souls, bear this in mind when the time comes for you to make your choice. Seek a companion for life's joys and sorrows with whom you can kneel down in prayer without feeling that there is a wall between you. All other things matter little; beauty of face will vanish, wealth cannot endure forever. If you desire the greatest measure of God's blessings in your married estate, seek as the first qualification of the husband or wife of your bosom beauty of soul and riches in God — godliness and purity of the faith.

II. The Prohibition of the Sixth Commandment.

The prohibition of this commandment reads: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Adultery in the sight of God is any violation, by thought, word, or deed, of the sanctity of marriage.

a. It is a violation of the sanctity of marriage to disrupt the marriage-bond. This is done by those who leave a spouse. For, as we have seen, those who are married are joined together by God Himself in a lifelong union, Matt. 19, 6. To dissolve this union is to put asunder what God has joined together, is to fly in the face of the will of God. And this is

true not only in the case of such as have lived together as husband and wife for some time, or upon whom the marriage ceremony has been performed; it is equally true of such as are merely betrothed, or engaged to be married. To break an engagement to be married is just as truly a sin against the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," as to leave a spouse after many years of married life. In either case man is putting asunder what God has joined together, and what He would not have put asunder.

God Himself makes one exception to the rule that none shall dissolve the marital bonds. This exception is stated in Matt. 19, 9: "Except it be for fornication." If one of the two persons who are married to each other becomes unfaithful, living with some other person as one flesh, the innocent party may, if he or she so desires, leave the guilty party. The sinful act does not dissolve the marital bond; but it gives the innocent party the choice of either dissolving the marriage-bond or of forgiving the offense. And if the innocent party chooses to leave the guilty party, the Bible does not forbid. — In still another case may a married person become free from the marriage-bond. This is the case if the other party breaks the bond, that is, forsakes the spouse and will not be persuaded to return. In that case the married estate is broken — in a most ungodly manner, it is true; but it is broken. And the forsaken party is free even to marry another (1 Cor. 7, 15). The marriage-bond has been broken by the party leaving the spouse. (Of course, the person who is thus being freed from the marriage-bond — either through lawful choice on account of the unfaithfulness of the other, or by compulsion through the malicious desertion of the other — must be careful to observe the regulations of the civil law before contracting another marriage.)

The marriage-bond actually and lawfully existing between Philip and Herodias was thus fully broken and dissolved by Herodias, who left her lawful husband Philip and lived as the wife of Herod, Matt. 14, 3. 4. She thereby committed adultery; and Herod, in living with her as her husband, also committed adultery, Matt. 19, 9.

It is adultery not only to disrupt existing marriage-bonds, but also to violate them. Thus David committed adultery. He did not, at first, intend to separate Bathsheba from Uriah; but he lived with her as one flesh during Uriah's absence, 2 Sam. 11, 1—5. He did not have regard for the sanctity of Uriah's and Bathsheba's marriage; he did not fear to violate it. And by violating the marriage-bond

between Uriah and Bathsheba, he violated also the marriage-bond existing between himself and his lawful wife.

Thus adultery is *"everything whereby the divine ordinance of matrimony is broken or violated"* by those *"in wedlock."* Qu. 52.

b. The married estate is a holy estate. And the intimate union existing between husband and wife is holy within wedlock. It is so holy that none should dare to practise it but those whom God has joined together in marriage. Those who practise it outside of wedlock are dishonoring, desecrating marriage. — Thus did Samson (Judg. 16, 4), who was made to suffer and finally to lose his life on that account. — All sins of this kind are called "fornication," "uncleanness," "filthiness." In Eph. 5, 3 we are told that they should "not be once named" among Christians. Christians should be so pure at heart that even the naming of such sins should offend them; much less should it be said of Christians that they practise them. — There are other sinful acts against this commandment, which St. Paul abhors to mention — they are so shameful. He merely hints at them, saying that they "are done of them in secret," Eph. 5, 12. These are sins which have been known to have been practised by the young, even children. These do them "in secret," when they are alone, perhaps in the dark, when they imagine that no eye sees them. — Whoever practises sins of this kind — alone or with companions of his iniquity — is disregarding the holiness of, is desecrating, marriage.

Hence, adultery is *"everything whereby the divine ordinance of matrimony is . . . desecrated . . . out of wedlock."* Qu. 52.

c. We have spoken of *acts* whereby this commandment is broken. But it applies to sinful *words* also. Eph. 5, 4 forbids "foolish talking," that is, filthy, unclean, nasty words; likewise "jesting," that is, filthy, nasty jokes. These are "not convenient," that is, not proper. They are inconsistent with the purity which God demands of Christians. Filthy words are but the bubbling foam rising from the seething filth of the heart. If, then, these words are filthy and full of stench, what a cesspool of blackest filth must the heart be! — Thus the Sixth Commandment forbids the *desecration of matrimony not only by deeds, but also by words.* Qu. 52.

d. But this commandment judges not only the deeds and words of man, but the thoughts of his heart as well. Man may commit adultery in his heart. "Evil thoughts" are called "adulteries, fornications," Matt. 15, 19. Christ speaks

of one who "looketh on a woman to lust after her." To look on a woman, to see her, is not wrong; but to "lust after her," that is, to think evil, filthy thoughts as one sees her, is sin. And whosoever does this "hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," Matt. 5, 27. 28. He has used his eyes in arousing or feeding the evil thoughts of his heart. Whoever does this has "eyes full of adultery," 2 Pet. 2, 14. For the sin of his heart will appear even in the gloating of his eyes, which feed with sinful pleasure upon whatever may add fuel to the flame of sin in the heart. — Herod thus committed adultery with heart and eye when he looked with delight upon the lewd dance of the daughter of Herodias, Matt. 14, 6. Potiphar's wife also sinned with heart and eye when she looked with evil thoughts upon Joseph (Gen. 39, 6. 7). So do all who use their eyes to look upon immoral pictures, lewd performances upon the stage, etc. — To harbor and to nourish immoral thoughts of the heart also is a desecration of matrimony and, therefore, adultery, Matt. 5, 27. 28. — Hence, marriage may be desecrated *not only by deeds and words, but also by evil thoughts and desires.* Qu. 53.

e. Sins against the Sixth Commandment provoke the dire anger of God. "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," Heb. 13, 4. They often receive punishment in this life. Not only do they justly reap shame and contempt in the sight of man, but the sins of immorality cause sufferings, misery, and premature death. For the consuming fire of evil passions burns up the strength of the body, and especially the health of the mind. Hospitals, and especially insane asylums, gather in the victims of the filth of their hearts. But more dreadful is the wrath to come, the suffering in hell-fire, of those who do not heed the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

We have thus seen that the Sixth Commandment forbids *"everything whereby the divine ordinance of matrimony is broken, violated, or desecrated, be it in or out of wedlock, by deed, word, or desire."* Qu. 53.

III. The Command of the Sixth Commandment.

By forbidding adultery, that is, everything whereby the divine ordinance of matrimony is broken, violated, or desecrated, the Sixth Commandment, by implication, demands everything whereby marriage is maintained in purity and honor. Our Catechism expresses such command in the explanation by instructing all men, whether they are married or not, how they may on their part keep inviolate the

honor of holy matrimony, and by informing those who are married of the special duties imposed upon them.

a. The command of the Sixth Commandment for all men reads: "We should . . . lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed."

1. "Chaste" means "free from evil thoughts or passions." The injunction that we lead a chaste life, therefore, demands that we should be pure at heart, and that we should battle against, and suppress, all evil thoughts and lusts of the flesh. — If thus the heart is chaste, we shall, as a matter of course, also lead "a decent life in word and deed." We shall be decent in our words. For, as we have stated, our words are but the overflow of the heart. If the heart is clean, no unclean words can flow from the lips. And as the Bible demands chastity of the heart, so it demands proof of such purity of heart in decency of speech, Eph. 4, 29. "Corrupt communication" is foul or nasty words, filthy jests, and the like. These should not be heard from the lips of a Christian. But as his heart is filled with purity, so his words should express "that which is good for edifying," whereby others may be builded up in purity and godliness, "that it may minister grace," proclaim the grace of God "unto the hearers." —

Whoever is thus chaste at heart and decent in words will also "lead a . . . decent life . . . in deed." Such decency of life is demanded in Rom. 13, 13. Christians should walk "honestly," that is, honorably, decently, "as in the day," when their actions can be seen by all men; "not in chambering," that is, gross sins of immorality, "or wantonness," lewd excesses. The very fact that they are Christians is an incentive unto purity. For their body is not their own, but is the temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 6, 19. By sins of immorality they desecrate this body, this temple of the Holy Ghost. Hence, while impurity is sinful in all men, it is doubly sinful in the Christian. — An example of chastity and decency is Joseph. His mind was filled with thoughts of God. And hence, when he was enticed to adultery, he refused to "sin against God," Gen. 39.

2. In order that we may "lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed," it is necessary that we should use the proper methods to enable us to resist and, as far as possible, to avoid temptation. — When David repented of his great sin, he prayed: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," Ps. 51, 10. He does not rely on his own strength to lead a chaste and decent life;

for he has found how quickly man's strength fails him. Neither does he ask God to cleanse his old heart; man's natural heart is so evil that it cannot become clean in the sight of God. If he is to have a clean heart, God must create a new heart, make a new heart out of nothing. This is accomplished by God's Word. Hence we are to pray as David did; but we must also use the Word of God, whereby a new heart is created within us. — Thus did Joseph. When temptation approached him, he thought of God, of the Word of God, which forbids uncleanness, makes it a sin. Gen. 39. Thus we, too, must *"quench the evil desires with God's Word and prayer."* Qu. 54. This is the first, most important, and most powerful means — the only means whereby we can truly conquer sin. — But the Bible points out to us also means of avoiding temptation. David was tempted and fell when, neglecting his duty as king and commander of his army, he remained at home in ease and idleness (2 Sam. 11, 1. 2). This time of idleness was the devil's opportunity to bring about David's downfall. And whoever, like David, is idle invites Satan's temptations in like manner. Hence a Christian should never be idle. He should always have something to occupy his mind. To this end he should be faithful in the performance of the duties of his calling, always laboring eagerly, and with his mind absorbed in his work. And even during hours of recreation his mind should not be permitted to be idle, but he should have his thoughts fully employed in play, in reading, in conversation with friends, in the contemplation of the beauties of nature, etc. He should never sit or stand about without thinking of, or doing, anything in particular. For as soon as his mind is idle, Satan will be ready to busy it with sinful thoughts. *Industry,* constant whole-heartedness in work or recreation, shuts out many an opportunity for sin, many a temptation. — Intemperance in the use of food and drink also opens the door to temptation. He who eats too much or who drinks too much, especially intoxicants, renders himself unable to control his mind. And Satan will be quick to grasp the opportunity of filling it with sinful thoughts. Therefore St. Paul warns against "rioting and drunkenness," Rom. 13, 13. "Rioting" is disorderly banqueting, gorging one's self with the good things of the table. Overeating is not only a frequent cause of sickness and of an early death and, therefore, a sin against the Fifth Commandment, but it also makes the mind and soul slow and sluggish and unable to resist temptation, and is, therefore, a sin against the Sixth Commandment. Thus Herod's banquet was an occasion for lewd thoughts and

sinful pleasures. — The same is true, in an even greater measure, of drunkenness, which not only destroys the body, but also incapacitates the mind completely to resist evil. Drunkenness always finds a very close associate in immorality, and is seldom found without it. Prov. 23, 31—33. He who would guard against unchasteness and impurity must, therefore, practise *temperance* in eating and drinking. — Again, evil associates and surroundings are instruments of Satan in kindling in the hearts and minds of men the flames of evil passions. Against such Solomon warns Prov. 1, 10: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Sinners entice us when they arrange *"opportunities for unchasteness,"* for the rousing of evil thoughts and passions. Thus did the daughter of Herodias by her lewd dance, Matt. 14. The same thing is done by lewd dancers upon the stage of our days or by improper pictures, by impure books, immoral language, jests, etc. The same result is produced also by the social dance, in which the chief and real pleasure is not found in the "graceful movements," — for then it would afford equal pleasure if men danced with men, or husbands with their wives, — but in the sinfully close approach and the embrace of strange men and strange women. The police records bear ample testimony to the temptations which arise from the social dance.

Thus the Sixth Commandment requires of all men that they *"lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed,"* Qu. 53, and to this end *"quench the evil desires with God's Word and prayer, industry and temperance, and . . . flee and avoid all opportunity for unchasteness,"* Qu. 54.

b. The duty which the Sixth Commandment imposes upon married people especially is that "each love and honor his spouse."

1. One's spouse is the person with whom one is united in wedlock, one's husband or wife. "Each" should love and honor his spouse. For this is the divine plan and intention that every one who is capable of marriage should enter the estate of matrimony. (*Large Catechism,* 425, 211; 426, 218.) "Each" should have *his spouse,* a spouse whom he has won or received as a precious gift of God.

2. Each should "love . . . his spouse." This is the first and foremost duty of married people, that they should love each other, a duty which they have assumed by their expressed pledge and promise as they entered wedlock by their engagement to marry. It is, furthermore, a duty which the Bible imposes upon them (Eph. 5, 23. 28). Such marital love demands that they live together in harmony and in

mutual affection and helpfulness in good and in evil days, and share with each other all joys and all sorrows. The Bible pictures the proper relation between husband and wife as being like unto the relation between Christ and His Church, the husband being the head, and loving, governing, and caring for, his wife as his own body, and the wife loving her husband as her own head (Eph. 5, 23—29). Where such mutual love exists, there will be no complaint of "tyranny" or "slavery." And wherever such complaint is heard, we may rest assured that the will of God is disregarded by the one or the other — very probably by both.

3. Each should "honor his spouse." The wife is the husband's helpmeet (Gen. 2, 18), whom he has received from the hand of God that together they should walk through this life unto their common inheritance in heaven (1 Pet. 3, 7). He should, therefore, honor her as a precious gift of God, nourish and cherish her (Eph. 5, 29), and shun all bitterness toward her (Col. 3, 19). — The wife should honor the husband as one whom God has given to be her head (Eph. 5, 23), and should submit herself unto him as unto the Lord (Eph. 5, 22; 1 Pet. 3, 5. 6).

Thus this commandment enjoins upon married people especially *"that each should love and honor his spouse, the husband his wife as his helpmeet, and the wife her husband as her head."* Qu. 55.

Conclusion. — As we consider the requirements of the Sixth Commandment and then examine ourselves, we realize that, though we guard our lips and avoid gross outward immorality, our hearts are not clean before God. His grace alone can heal our sore (Ps. 38, 5). His Son alone can clothe us in robes of perfect righteousness.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

(Qu. 56—61.)

Introduction. — For our temporal well-being and happiness God has given unto us our lives and homes, and has secured us in their possession by issuing the Fifth and the Sixth Commandment. But to these gifts He has added earthly possessions, "money and goods." "After our persons and wife or husband, temporal property is the nearest good. That also God wishes to have secure, and has commanded that none shall damage or injure his neighbor in his possessions." (*Large Catechism,* 426, 223.) This is done in the Seventh Commandment: —

"Thou Shalt Not Steal."

I. The Prohibition of the Seventh Commandment.

a. The prohibition of the Seventh Commandment reads, "Thou shalt not steal." And what it is that we should not steal is stated in the explanation. "We should . . . not take our neighbor's money or goods." Money is the medium of exchange with which we can buy goods or secure men's services, while the word "goods" here describes all other earthly possessions. — Our neighbor is here said to have money and goods which belong to him. How did he receive them? All earthly things are creatures of God. He has made them, and they properly and strictly belong unto Him (Ps. 24, 1; 50, 12). But God has given them into the possession of man that he should enjoy them and use them according to the will of God. And whatever man has thus received at the hands of God is said to belong to him, to be his property. Hence, a man's money or goods are those things which God has given unto him that they should be his own. — Nor has God given equal shares to all men. He has given some more than others; He has made some rich and others poor (Prov. 22, 2). Those who are rightfully rich owe their riches unto God, and those who are rightfully poor owe this fact also to the dispensation of God. Such as condemn, and would forcibly abolish, inequality in the possession of earthly wealth are, therefore, condemning God's own established order. Since, then, God has distributed earthly possessions among men, every one may call that his own which God has given unto him. Our neighbor's money and goods, therefore, is that which God has given unto another, and to which we have no right or title. — That which now belongs to our neighbor may indeed lawfully come into our possession. This is the case when we receive money or goods as a gift or as an inheritance, or if we receive it by agreement with our neighbor in exchange for something of equal value, as money, goods, labor, etc. Receiving into our possession what was our neighbor's is not contrary to the will of God, and is not forbidden in this commandment. This commandment rather enjoins us from securing possession of our neighbor's money or goods without his consent and in an unlawful way. All such unlawful gaining possession of our neighbor's property is prohibited by the words, "Thou shalt not steal," Qu. 56; "for *to steal is nothing else than to get another's property wrongfully into our possession.*" (*Large Catechism,* 426, 224.)

b. How is this done? The explanation of this commandment in our Catechism describes different kinds of methods employed in stealing.

1. "We should . . . not take our neighbor's money or goods." Qu. 58. We "take" our neighbor's money or goods if we secure possession of them without even a "show of right." This was done by the thieves who attacked the man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, "which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." Luke 10, 30. Such forcible taking possession of another's possessions is called *"robbery."* — A different method of "taking" what did not belong to him was employed by Achan, Josh. 7. He secretly took and hid a "Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold." To take secretly without force what one has no right to take is called "stealing," or "theft." — Theft was committed also by Gehazi, 2 Kings 5. He received money and garments from Naaman by deceit, by telling Naaman that Elisha desired them. Naaman had no intention of enriching Gehazi, neither did Elisha. Securing these gifts by lying and deceit was theft on the part of Gehazi. — Theft, though with an attempt to cloak it, is also practised by such as wager, or bet, that is, stake money or its equivalent upon an uncertain issue; likewise by such as gamble, that is, play games for stakes of money or its equivalent; or who seek to get what does not properly belong to them through one of the various gambling devices; or who take part in raffles or take "chances," depending either upon chance or on a contest, as target-shooting, etc. The object of those taking part in any of these schemes is, of course, not to give their money to others; for this could be done without the use of a gambling scheme. The statement, "In case he wins, I want to give this or that to him," is a mere sham and subterfuge. A fair exchange of values, likewise, is not contemplated. The truth is that he who takes part in a scheme of this kind is so anxious to get what belongs to his neighbor that he is willing to risk some of his own property in the attempt to get it. That is dishonesty, theft. — Those who actually take part in any of the above-mentioned means of stealing are, of course, transgressing the Seventh Commandment. But there are such as do not themselves take part in any of these acts, but assist those who perform them, as Saul assisted in the murder of Stephen by watching the garments of those who stoned him. There are those who hide the goods which others have stolen, or who *conduct* games of chance, raffles, etc. Of these the Bible says that they are "partners with thieves," Prov. 29, 24. By every law of human and divine justice these are in equal guilt with those who commit the theft; "they hate their

own souls." — To all who practise sins of this kind St. Paul says, Eph. 4, 28: "Let him that stole steal no more." Instead of the wrongful gain through theft they should seek rightful gain through honest labor, as through the means through which God would supply their needs.

Thus the words, "Thou shalt not steal," demand that *"we should not take our neighbor's money or goods,"* Qu. 58, and hence forbid *"every kind of robbery and theft,"* Qu. 59.

2. "We should . . . not . . . get them by false ware or dealing." Qu. 58. "Ware" is any article of commerce, any article which is bought or sold. "False ware" is any article which is not as it is represented to be. "Dealing" is any commercial transaction, every act of buying, selling, serving for money, etc. "False dealing" is all dealing wherein we do not give the full equivalent for that which we receive. Another word for "false ware or dealing" is "fraud." — Whatever one secures through "false ware or dealing" is "that which is not his." And if he adds to it by further "false ware or dealing," he "increaseth that which is not his," Hab. 2, 6. (*Large Catechism,* 427, 226; 428, 228.) — Fraud in general is forbidden in 1 Thess. 4, 6, where we are told that "this is the will of God" (v. 3), "that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter." In dealing with our neighbor, we give him some of that which is ours, and we are entitled to take some of that which belongs to him. God Himself tells us how much we may take, *viz.,* as much as the property is worth which he receives from us. We should not "go beyond" that, not reach out for more. For if we take more, even if our brother thinks we are dealing justly by him, we defraud him. (*Large Catechism,* 430, 240.) For this deal is not a deal between him and us only; God is a party to, and a judge of, every business transaction. "The Lord is the avenger of all such." — Fraud may be committed through dishonest weights and measures, Lev. 19, 35. 36. (Ephah, a dry measure, about $1^1/_{10}$ bushel; hin, a liquid measure, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ gallon.) — Fraud may be practised also by taking "usury or increase." "Usury" is uncharitable taking pay for the use of money, "increase," uncharitable taking pay for the use of other property which we have lent unto our neighbor. If our neighbor uses our money or goods and is benefited thereby, it is fair that we should share in such gain. But it is uncharitable, and therefore wrong and a sin against the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," to demand pay for the use of our money or property if our neighbor, through no dishonesty or fault of his, does not receive benefit, but perhaps even sustains

loss. The Bible classes such taking of "usury or increase" as fraud. — Another kind of fraud is practised by him who "useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." Jer. 22, 13. Neither is it enough that we give him something, perhaps as much as we *must* give in order to have him serve us at all. We must give him what his work is worth; and though, being unable to find work elsewhere, necessity compels him to serve us for less than his work is worth, we are defrauding him of just as much as his work is worth beyond what we pay him. He who gives smaller wages than he should "buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong." His sin is the more heinous if he, the meanwhile, is accumulating wealth and planning the enjoyment of his ill-gotten gain (vv. 14—17). — Another form of fraud is laziness, failure to work, 2 Thess. 3, 10. A Christian should work because God demands it. He should work that he may "eat his own bread" (v. 12) instead of relying upon the charity of others to provide for him; for in that case he is stealing from others. He should not labor for himself only, but also "that he may have to give to him that needeth," Eph. 4, 28. As long as there are those in the world whom he could help if he did work, he is, by his laziness, defrauding them. And if, notwithstanding his refusal to work, he still eats, he is eating what before God he has no right to eat; he is stealing his very food. Nor is it a matter of indifference what kind of work is done. He should "labor, working with his hands the thing which is good"; he should do such work, follow such calling, whereby mankind is benefited. — The text 2 Thess. 3, 10 also condemns as fraud the action of such as labor for others and take wages, but who do not give as full and faithful service as their wages are worth. Whatever part of his wages one receives without rendering its full value in service is stolen (Tit. 2, 9. 10). (*Large Catechism,* 427, 225. 226.) — Another form of fraud is unscrupulous borrowing. To borrow is to receive the use of our neighbor's property with his consent. To use what is not ours without the consent of the owner is, of course, dishonest; it is stealing the use of the property from him who alone has the right and title to such use. But even if he consents, we are not relieved of responsibility. We should "pay again," return it. This means that we return it undamaged. He who damages borrowed property is in duty bound to make restitution, or else he has stolen to the full amount of the damage done. Much more does he sin who fails to return what he has borrowed. A Christian will, therefore, not borrow without considering

how he will be able to repay. He who borrows unnecessarily and without definite knowledge as to how he will be able to repay is deliberately taking a chance of being unable to repay, that is, of becoming a thief. For "the wicked borroweth, and payeth not again." Ps. 37, 21.

Hence, the commandment, *"Thou shalt not steal,"* forbids us to *"get"* our neighbor's money or goods *"by false ware or dealing."* Qu. 58, that is, *by "usury and fraud,"* Qu. 59.

3. The words, "We should fear and love God," teach us that God would have our hearts such as, from the fear and love of God, abhor sins against this commandment. The heart must be free from thoughts which are not in harmony with this commandment. And thoughts which are in conflict with the will of God as here expressed are called "thefts" in the words of Christ (Matt. 15, 19). — Such evil thoughts are "envy and covetousness," Qu. 59. "Envy" is the affection of the heart according to which we grieve and fret because others have more or something better than we, and which makes us long for its possession. Thus, when the Philistines saw that Isaac became great and wealthy, they envied him (Gen. 26, 12—16). St. James tells us that "bitter envying and strife in your hearts" is "earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. 3, 14. 15). — "Covetousness" is the desire to have that which God has not given to us, which does not belong to us. Thus, when Achan saw the Babylonish garment and the silver and gold, he "coveted them," Josh. 7, 21. Covetousness is one of those sins of which St. Paul says to Christians, "Let it not be once named among you" (Eph. 5, 3).

Thus the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," forbids also *"envy and covetousness within our hearts,"* Qu. 59.

c. The sins which the Seventh Commandment forbids are great and grievous in the sight of God, and expose man to the wrath and punishment of the Lord. Man is warned not to defraud his brother "because that the Lord is the avenger of all such," 1 Thess. 4, 6. He is to avoid unjust weights and measures because "I am the Lord, your God," Lev. 19, 36. He should not take usury or increase, but "fear thy God," Lev. 25, 36. Woe and punishment is prophesied upon him "that useth his neighbor's services without wages," Jer. 22, 13. And he that is partner with a thief is said to hate his own soul; he does that which must destroy his soul, Prov. 29, 24. — Dishonesty often finds retribution in this life. Thus Achan's theft was speedily visited with death, Josh. 7, 25, and Gehazi became leprous, 2 Kings 5, 27. (*Large Catechism,* 429, 236—238; 430, 240—245.) But even though

he who trespasses against this commandment should not feel the avenging hand of God in this life, he will find himself clothed with shame and misery in eternity. "How long" (shall he enjoy it)? He "ladeth himself with thick clay" Hab. 2, 6.

We have now seen that the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," requires that *"we should not take our neighbor's money or goods, nor get them by false ware or dealing,"* Qu. 58, and hence forbids *"every kind of robbery, theft, usury, and fraud, as well as envy and covetousness within our hearts,"* Qu. 59.

II. The Command of the Seventh Commandment.

The sum and substance of the Seventh Commandment also is included in the words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22, 39). We should not steal from him because we love him. If this our love is sincere, it will not only prompt us not to harm our neighbor in his property, but will also induce us to enhance the value of his possessions as we would our own. Therefore the explanation of the Seventh Commandment in our Catechism properly expresses the command of the Seventh Commandment in the words: "But help him to improve and protect his property and business." Qu. 60.

a. Our neighbor's "property" is all that he owns, his "money or goods." This we should "help him to improve," that is, assist him to add to its substance or value. We should also "help him to protect" it, that is, turn away whatever may lessen or destroy it. — His business is the means whereby he acquires, and keeps possession of, property, his occupation or calling whereby he makes a living, as farming, trading, building, etc. This we should "help him to improve," that is, assist him in achieving greater success therein. We should also "help him to protect his business," that is, turn away whatever may deprive him of success in his calling.

b. Helping our neighbor to improve and protect his property and business may be done *by word,* by counsel and advice. Thus Joseph advised his brethren as to what they should say unto Pharaoh in order that they might be permitted to dwell in the land of Goshen, where they could pasture their flocks, so that they would not lose them in the famine, but might continue in their occupation or business. (Gen. 47, 33. 34.) By this counsel he helped them to protect their property and business. So should we always be ready to *"assist our neighbor in word . . . that his property and business may be increased and preserved from harm."* Qu. 61.

c. We should help our neighbor also *"in deed"* to improve and protect his property and business. This is done by honesty and faithfulness in our business dealings with our neighbor. Thus Laban acknowledged that Jacob had, during his fourteen years of service, brought increase to his, Laban's, wealth (Gen. 30, 27. 28). And Joseph, though wrongfully a slave, brought prosperity to Potiphar by his faithful service (Gen. 39, 1—6). — Or when loss threatens our neighbor, we should help to prevent it if that is within our power. Thus the children of Israel were commanded to bring back to the neighbor his straying beast of burden, to give help to their enemy's beast which had fallen under its burden (Ex. 23, 4. 5), and to return to the owner whatever lost article they found (Deut. 22, 3). — Again, the neighbor's need may require that we help him by giving — in which case we should give cheerfully; or that we lend unto him — in which case we should lend freely, without demanding any profit from such loan, Matt. 5, 24. And in order that we might be able thus to help our neighbor, we should consider it one of the purposes for which we labor "that we may have to give to him that needeth," Eph. 4, 28. — Thus we help our neighbor "to improve and protect his property and business" if we assist him *"in deed that his property and business may be increased and preserved from harm."* Qu. 61.

d. Such service should be rendered with all our hearts. The motive should be sincere love and pity. "He that *hath pity* upon the poor," etc., Prov. 19, 17. — An example of such unselfish love and consideration for the neighbor's prosperity is Abraham, Gen. 13, 1—12. Likewise, Zacchaeus, who gave half of all his goods to the poor, Luke 19, 8. — That this help of our neighbor should flow freely from the heart is evident also from the fact that it is to be a service unto God, who looks first and above all upon the heart. "He that hath pity upon the poor *lendeth unto the Lord,"* Prov. 19, 17. And "to do good and to communicate" is called sacrifice unto God, Heb. 13, 16.

e. Help and assistance thus rendered unto our neighbor is pleasing in the sight of God, Heb. 13, 16, and has the promise of His reward. For He looks upon gifts to the poor as a loan to Himself, Prov. 19, 17. And He repays every loan; He blesses those who help their fellow-men. Giving to the poor does not make the giver poor. (*Large Catechism,* 432, 252. 253.)

Conclusion. — To be ready and willing always to help friend and foe, and to do it gladly, without hesitation and

without feeling it to be a burden, requires hearts which have become perfect in the love of their neighbor through the love of their God. Whoever examines himself will find that he is falling exceedingly short of this perfection. Wherefore we must here also flee unto Him in whom we have such perfection as divine righteousness demands of us.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

(Qu. 62—72.)

(Prefatory Remarks. — The Eighth Commandment touches one of the sorest spots in present-day civilization and in present-day Christianity. Many other sins are practised extensively and without much reserve. But we always find notable exceptions — men and women who valiantly battle and testify against them. But the sins of false witness in their various forms seem to rule the world almost without restraint, and appear to be the last sins which even Christians seek to put off. Many a person is regular in the use of the means of grace, reverent in the use of God's name, decent in word and deed, and honest in all his dealings with his fellow-men; but he feels no compunctions in insinuating against, betraying, slandering, and defaming even such as are his brethren in the faith. How many hours are spent in communicating, discussing, and self-righteously abhorring the sins of others! — We, who are called upon to teach men to know the will of God, have all reason to pray fervently that God may first of all guard us against these sins, and then make His commandment upon our lips a living power and a burning fire, so that the sins of evil tongues may appear in all their hideousness.)

Introduction. — "Besides body, wife or husband, and temporal possessions, we have yet another treasure, namely, the personal honor and good report, with which we cannot dispense. For it is intolerable to live among men in open shame and general contempt. Therefore God wishes the reputation, character, and honor of our neighbor to be assailed or diminished as little as his money and possessions, that every one may stand in his integrity before wife, children, servants, and neighbors." (*Large Catechism,* 432, 255; 433, 256.) — Protection to man's honor and name is offered in the Eighth Commandment: —

"Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbor."

I. The Prohibition of the Eighth Commandment.

a. The Eighth Commandment reads: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." What is meant by "bearing witness" is seen from the history of John the Baptist (John 1, 15). We are told that John "bare witness"

of Christ. And this bearing witness consisted in John's testimony concerning Christ's person and work. To bear witness, then, is to testify, to say something concerning some one — one's self or others. — It is not wrong or forbidden to bear witness. But bearing false witness is forbidden. Witness may be false for one of two reasons: —

1. It may be untrue. And all witness that is untrue is false witness. Thus, when the two "men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth . . ., saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king," 1 Kings 21, 13, they bore false witness, because Naboth had not committed that sin. — As in the case of Naboth, false witness is often met with in the courts of law. False witness is borne in court by such as *bring false accusations* against any man, as Jezebel caused false accusations to be brought against Naboth (1 Kings 21, 8—11). False witness was borne also against Christ by the Jews when they said: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar" (Luke 23, 2), and against the disciples when the soldiers at the grave were bribed into saying, "His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept" (Matt. 28, 11—15). — False witness is borne also by *unjust judges* who condemn the innocent or release the guilty, as did Pilate when he sentenced Christ to die (Luke 23, 24); by Felix, when he did not release Paul (Acts 24, 26); by the sons of Eli when they pronounced judgment according to the bribes which were offered them instead of according to justice (1 Sam. 8, 3). — False witness is, furthermore, borne by *attorneys-at-law* who for money seek to free the guilty or to convict the innocent (Is. 5, 20). For it is just as truly false witness to call the guilty innocent as to call the innocent guilty. (*Large Catechism,* 433, 268; 434, 261.)

Thus we see that false witness, which is prohibited, is *"every untrue testimony in court."* Qu. 64.

(It may be proper at this place to call attention to the precept of the Bible that, while Christians may use their right to appeal to the civil powers for protection against ungodly men, Acts 23, 12—17, they should try to *avoid* strife, and hence lawsuits, at all times, Rom. 12, 18; and especially should they never seek justice in a court of law against any man who is — and while he is — a brother in the faith, 1 Cor. 6, 1—7.)

2. Witness may also be false witness because it flows from a heart which is false. The heart is false whenever it does not love the neighbor as itself. A false heart of this kind is also called a "deceitful" heart, because it will try to

deceive both itself and others by making the neighbor appear in a worse light than is compatible with truth. A false, or deceitful, heart is described in Zech. 8, 17, where the prophet says: "Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor." We imagine that whereof we are not certain. He who loves a neighbor as he should will not imagine evil against him. He will not want to believe evil of him, unless convincing proof compels him. He who has no such proof, and yet believes evil of his neighbor, "imagines evil" against him; he does not truly love his neighbor. His evil thoughts and unfounded suspicions flowing from a false heart, are in themselves "false witness" (Matt. 15, 19: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, . . . false witness"). And since he does not love his neighbor, his thoughts flow from a false, or deceitful, heart, even when he thinks of proven sins of his neighbor. And if, from such lack of love toward his neighbor, he speaks about the imagined or real sins of his neighbor, his words also are "false witness," because they flow from a false, non-loving heart. — Thus Saul "imagined evil in his heart" against David when he supposed that David had conspired against him, 1 Sam. 22, 13. His thoughts were false witness; and when he uttered them, his words also were false witness. And when Doeg the Edomite told Saul that Ahimelech had given David bread and a sword (1 Sam. 22, 9. 10), though he spoke the truth, he bore false witness; for he knew that Saul would deal unjustly by Ahimelech for this; and had he loved Ahimelech as he should, he would not have betrayed him.

Thus "false witness" is *"not only every untrue testimony in court, but all words and thoughts against our neighbor which come from a deceitful heart,"* Qu. 64.

b. The explanation of the Eighth Commandment in our Catechism mentions four ways in which false witness is borne against our neighbor.

1. "We should . . . not deceitfully *belie* . . . our neighbor." To belie our neighbor is to tell lies about him. (*Note.* — This is the meaning of the English word "belie." It is also beyond doubt the meaning in which Luther wanted "beluegen" taken. Prof. Mezger, in his *Entwuerfe zu Katechesen,* supports this statement by these two facts: that Luther approved the Latin translation of his explanation, "ne proximum falsis mendaciis involvamus"; and that, in his hymn, "That Man a Godly Life Might Live," Luther himself interprets the Eighth Commandment thus: "Bear not false witness, nor belie thy neighbor by false calumny." [*Ev. Luth. Hymn Book,* 391, 6.] Qu. 65 of our exposition,

therefore, expresses Luther's meaning only indirectly.) What is meant by "deceitfully belying" our neighbor is seen from the example of Absalom (2 Sam. 15, 2—6), who lied unto the children of Israel about his father in order that he might, by his lies, steal the hearts of the men of Israel from his father unto himself. Another example is Gehazi, 2 Kings 5, 22, who lied to Naaman about Elisha in order to enrich himself at the expense of Naaman's good will toward Elisha. The same sin was committed also by the false witnesses against Naboth, 1 Kings 21, 13, and by the false witnesses against Christ, Matt. 26, 59—61, all of whom lied with the intention of convicting the innocent. They "deceitfully belied" them. — But if we are not to tell lies *about* any one, it is evident that we are not to speak lies *to* any one. Therefore St. Paul says: "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another," Eph. 4, 25. These words also show the full meaning of "lying." Putting away lying includes *speaking the truth.* Withholding the truth when we should speak it also is lying. — True, not all speaking of falsehood or withholding of the truth is "deceitful lying"; there are cases in which love prompts such action (Ex. 1, 19—21; Josh. 2, 4; Heb. 11, 31). But speaking a falsehood or withholding the truth *with a deceitful heart* is a sin which is incompatible with a Christian's state of renewal in the likeness of God (Eph. 5, 24. 25). We have "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." However, God is a God of truth, and hates lying and falsehood, while the lie is a child of the devil, and his chief work and weapon (John 8, 44). Whosoever practises lying nurses in his own bosom the children of the devil, and walks in Satan's footsteps. He forfeits again the image of God, and returns to the likeness of the devil. Of all sins the lie is in a special sense a service of the devil, a fact which even the world recognizes; for a respectable man of the world will feel more deeply disgraced if he is called a liar than by any other epithet. In this the world is right. Much more should a Christian avoid lying. For though his lies be hidden from man, God will punish them. Prov. 19, 5.

Thus the words: "We should . . . not *deceitfully belie . . . our neighbor"* forbid *"telling him a falsehood or withholding from him the truth with a deceitful heart."* Qu. 65.

2. "We should . . . not deceitfully . . . *betray* . . . our neighbor." What is meant by betraying is seen from Prov. 11, 13: "A talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." To betray is to

reveal secrets. To betray our neighbor is to reveal our neighbor's secrets. These may be secrets which he himself has told us confidentially. Thus Samson told Delilah confidentially wherein lay his great strength; this was Samson's secret. — Or it may be something which we know because we are our neighbor's friends and companions, as Judas knew where Jesus could be found because he had been His disciple and had been with Him (John 18, 2). — Or it may be something which we have seen or heard by chance, as Doeg had seen by chance that Ahimelech had given David bread and a sword (1 Sam. 21, 1—9). — Our neighbor's secret, therefore, is anything which we know secretly of him and of which we cannot speak except to his harm. This includes also sins of our neighbor which are not known to others, but of which we have knowledge; for if we make them public, our neighbor is injured in his good name. — True, there are cases in which it is not "deceitfully betraying our neighbor" if we speak of his secrets. Such is the case whenever an innocent person would suffer harm if we kept silence. Thus it was right that Jonathan told David of Saul's intention to kill him (1 Sam. 20, 13), or that Paul's nephew told him of the secret conspiracy to murder Paul (Acts 23, 12—16). But whenever the keeping of the secret will not harm an innocent person, and especially if its becoming public will harm those whose secret it is, to make it known to others is "deceitfully betraying" our neighbor. Thus Delilah deceitfully betrayed Samson when she told the Philistines wherein his great strength lay (Judg. 16, 18); Judas betrayed Jesus when he told the Jews where Jesus could be found (Matt. 26, 59—61); and Doeg betrayed Ahimelech when he told Saul that Ahimelech had given David bread and a sword (1 Sam. 22, 6—19). For in all these cases the telling of the secret brought harm to those whose secret it was. Also, if we know secretly of a sin of our neighbor, we do nobody service, but harm our neighbor if we reveal it to others; we are deceitfully betraying our neighbor. And to say that we have a right to reveal our neighbor's sin *because we can prove it,* does not improve matters, but only makes them worse. For we then not only have committed sin, but are also trying to defend it (Is. 5, 20).

Thus the words, "We should . . . not *deceitfully* . . . *betray* . . . our neighbor," forbid *"revealing his secrets with a deceitful heart."* Qu. 66.

3. "We should . . . not deceitfully . . . *slander* our neighbor." To slander our neighbor is to spread evil reports about him in his absence and with little or no regard to the truth.

(*Note.* — "Slandering" differs in meaning from "afterreden" inasmuch as it implies either direct falsehood or exaggeration amounting to falsehood.) Thus Absalom slandered David when he told the children of Israel that David did not judge justly. Absalom did this unbeknown to David; moreover, he knew that his statements were not true. — Christians should not speak evil of their neighbor at all, not even if what they say is true, Jas. 4, 11. Whoever does this does not love his brother as himself; for no one would have others speak evil of himself. Much less should he speak evil of his brother when he is not certain, but merely supposes, that his charges are true, or has received them by hearsay, or even knows them to be false. Yet, he who does not love his brother sufficiently to abstain from speaking evil about him will generally be found to be very careless of the truth of the evil reports which he is spreading, thereby becoming a base slanderer. — Again, we read: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned," Luke 6, 37. To judge, or to condemn, is to say, "He is a thief, a murderer," etc. Christians should not do this; much less should they permit the gossips of the town to cause him thus to speak of a brother who has not even had an opportunity to speak for himself and to defend himself. (*Large Catechism,* 435, 268.)

Thus the words, "We should . . . not *deceitfully* . . . *slander* . . . our neighbor," prohibit *"speaking evil of him with a deceitful heart."* Qu. 67.

4. "We should . . . not deceitfully . . . *defame* our neighbor." To defame our neighbor is to take away, to injure or destroy, his good fame, that is, his good name. This is done by speaking evil of him, by spreading the report of his sins and shortcomings. What is said about him may be absolutely true; yet such speaking evil is an abomination before God and a disgrace before men. For it is not the speaking of *lies* which is here condemned, but the speaking of *evil.* Such as are slaves of this vice take delight in raising their hands in Pharisaic horror over the sins of others, declaring that they "cannot understand how their brother could ever do such a thing; they could never do anything like that." And they will brazenly try to defend their evil tongues by saying that they can prove all their words. And they see not and understand not that they are laying bare all the blackness of their own hearts and their soul's love of filth by stirring the filth and stench of their neighbor's sins. "When they know a slight offense of another," they "carry it into every corner, and are gratified that they can

stir up another's baseness, as swine roll themselves in the dirt and root in it with the snout." (*Large Catechism,* 436, 267.) He who sits and speaks against his brother is, in the Bible, called "wicked," and "one that forgets God"; and God threatens to "tear him in pieces," and none shall be able to deliver him. Ps. 50, 16. 19—21.

Thus the words, "We should . . . not *deceitfully . . . defame* our neighbor," forbid *"injuring or destroying his good fame with a deceitful heart."* Qu. 68.

c. All this does not mean that we should take no notice of the actual sins which our neighbor commits. To allow a brother to walk in sin without warning him would not be true love toward him. We should speak; but we should not speak to other men, or when he is not present. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and *tell* him his faults," the Savior says, Matt. 18, 15. To keep silence is sin. But do not tell others; tell *him.* And do not do it publicly, but "tell him his faults *between thee and him alone.*" By doing this, you will avoid bringing unnecessary disgrace upon him. Yet he who has sinned will hear you and will perhaps be led to repentance and a godlier life; thus he will be saved, and God will be glorified. This is harder to do than to slander and defame him. For our evil heart would prompt us to speak when and where we should keep silence, but is cowardly and weak when and where we should speak. (*Large Catechism,* 437, 276—278.)

We have now learned that the commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," requires that "we should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor." But the same love of God and of the neighbor which should prompt us to leave these things undone should also prompt us to seek the contrary virtues, whereby our neighbor's name and honor is protected. Therefore the explanation of the Eighth Commandment properly adds the command: "We should . . . defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything." Qu. 69.

II. Command of the Eighth Commandment.

a. "We should . . . *defend* him." — When charges are brought in court against any person, the accused is given an opportunity to defend himself. He may do this by showing that the accusation is entirely false, or that it is exaggerated, that, while the statement of facts is true, his acts were in accordance with the law, etc. In all these cases the defense consists in protecting the accused against false

accusations. To defend our neighbor, therefore, is to protect him against false accusations. — Jonathan defended David over against Saul. When Saul condemned David, Jonathan asked proof that David had done the king any wrong (1 Sam. 20, 30—32). Ahimelech also defended David; for when Saul charged that David had conspired to rebel against him, Ahimelech pointed out that David was the most loyal of all of Saul's servants (1 Sam. 22, 13. 14). — Nicodemus defended Jesus. When the priests and Pharisees condemned Jesus in His absence, Nicodemus did not directly deny His guilt; but he defended Jesus by pointing out to them that they had no right to condemn Him without having heard what He had to say in His own defense. — So should we defend our neighbor. The Word of God demands this, Prov. 31, 8. 9. The dumb are such as are unable to speak. Poisonous tongues are almost always cowardly, and do not speak in the presence of the victim of their malice, but in his absence. However, he who is not present cannot speak in his own defense; he is, for all practical purposes, dumb. Therefore it becomes our duty to open our mouths for him. He is "appointed to destruction"; the slanderers would "smite him with the tongue" (Jer. 18, 18). Hence, we should open our mouths to save him with our tongues. This is especially necessary if the slandered person is not rich and honored, — such generally find friends and defenders, — but if he is "poor and needy," despised and friendless. We should "judge righteously." We should not speak falsehood, or justify any evil deed. But we should say all that can be said in defense of the just rights of the accused. (Thus, "Have you yourself seen or heard what you charge against him? Do you know it to be the case, or did you receive your information by hearsay, perhaps by rumor or gossip? Have you given him an opportunity to present his side of the case? Have you done your duty by him of trying to correct him by speaking kindly unto him and showing him his fault? Do you speak because you love him, or does lovelessness and perhaps hatred guide your tongue?") "Therefore, if you encounter an evil tongue which betrays and slanders another, contradict such a one to his face that he may blush. Thus many a one will keep silence who else would bring some poor man into bad repute, from which he would not easily extricate himself." (*Large Catechism,* 436, 273.)

Thus the words, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," require that we *"defend him"* by *"protecting him against false accusations."* Qu. 70.

b. "We should . . . *speak well of him."* We should speak

well of him at all times. But this commandment demands such action on our part for the purpose of protecting our neighbor against false witness. Therefore it does not demand above all that we speak well of those of whom everybody else speaks well, but rather that we speak well especially of those of whom others — yea, everybody — speaks evil. — Thus did Jonathan, 1 Sam. 19, 4, and Ahimelech (1 Sam. 22, 14). When Saul spoke evil of David, they set forth his virtues. — But we should speak well not only of those who live uprightly. Our voice should be raised also in the case of those whose guilt we cannot deny. When others point to their evil works, we should say of them whatever good can be said truthfully. Thus Jesus Himself spoke well of the woman who was a sinner, and whose guilt He could not, and did not, deny (Luke 7, 44—46). — While thus abiding by the truth, we can silence many an evil tongue, and help the fallen and downtrodden to rise.

Hence, the words, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," demand of us that we *"speak well of him," "praising his good deeds and qualities as far as it can be done in keeping with the truth."* Qu. 71.

c. "We should . . . *put the best construction on everything."* To "put a construction upon" our neighbor's actions is to explain them. To put the best construction upon them is to explain them in the way which will place him in the best possible light. Many acts of our neighbor can be explained in a twofold way. Thus, when the centurion of Capernaum was kind to the Jews and built them a synagog at his own expense, it might have been said that he did this from selfish motives, — in order to gain popularity and political power, — or that he did it from sincere and unselfish love of the Jews and from love of the true God. To explain it in the former way would have been putting the worst construction upon it. But when the Jews said, "He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagog" (Luke 7, 5), they put the best construction upon it. On the other hand, when the Pharisees said of Jesus, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them" (Luke 15, 2), they meant to imply, "He is no better than they"; they put the worst construction upon Jesus' action. Eli also put the worst construction on the action of praying Hannah (1 Sam. 1, 14). — We are commanded to "put the best construction on everything." Even if our neighbor has done what is clearly and evidently wrong, while we must not call his actions right, we should turn to the light those circumstances which will make his sin appear less great. And whenever an explanation is admissible which

will free him of the charge of *intentional* wrong-doing, we should cling to this explanation unless the contrary has been proved. This is demanded in 1 Pet. 4, 8. For in this way we shall hide, cover, many a fault of our neighbor, and silence many an evil tongue. 1 Cor. 13, 7: "Charity believeth all things," is not suspicious, and does not insinuate, but trusts that the neighbor will do what is right before God. "Charity . . . hopeth all things," willing to trust that even the sinning brother will still turn unto righteousness. "Charity . . . endureth all things," does not seek revenge by spreading evil reports about the neighbor, but is ready to forgive and forget, and to lend him a helping hand in rising from, and putting away, sin.

Hence, the words "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," require that we *"put the best construction on everything," "charitably covering our neighbor's faults and frailties, and explaining in his favor whatever admits of such explanation."* Qu. 72.

We have thus learned that the Eighth Commandment demands that *"we should . . . defend our neighbor, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything."* Qu. 69.

Conclusion. — When we consider the demands of this commandment and examine our lives according to them, none can honestly deny his guilt in the sight of God. Even with the best intentions and with greatest watchfulness, our tongue only too often breaks all restraint. Much less can our hearts bear the light of the countenance of God. Unless the radiance from the cross of Christ bring the light of hope into our hearts, we must go down in utter despair.

THE NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS.

(Qu. 73—81.)

(Prefatory Remarks. — Many efforts have been made to find an essential difference between the Ninth and the Tenth Commandment, and many statements of such differences have been made. However, it is a debatable question whether any of these distinctions are based upon any real and essential differences in the text of these commandments, or whether they are merely hypothetical, made for the purpose of maintaining that all of the Ten Commandments differ essentially from one another. To enter upon this question here would serve no useful purpose. For even though one of the many distinctions which have been made could be shown to be well founded, to have and to keep a clear view of such differences even before one's own eyes at all stages of the discussion of these commandments in the class would be a task to which few

catechists would be equal. Much less could the pupils be expected to have a full and clear idea of such distinction. Moreover, such distinction is not essential to a thorough understanding of the will of God as expressed in these two commandments. The ordinary mind will find less difficulty in grouping all that the Bible teaches with regard to the will of God as here expressed under either or under both commandments than in dividing it into two essentially different parts, grouping some statements under the Ninth and others under the Tenth Commandment. Luther has, no doubt, done the only practical and the only profitable thing in combining both under one chapter and treating them as being identical in meaning. Neither is this procedure contrary to the honor which is due unto God, or in any way in conflict with wholesome doctrine. We, therefore, follow in the footsteps of Luther and of other tried and trusted leaders in dealing with these two commandments as being essentially one.

As to the subject-matter of these two commandments, it must be borne in mind that they do not refer principally and directly to the *act* of wrongfully seeking to gain possession of that which belongs to the neighbor, nor yet to the *active* longing of the heart for the possession thereof. For these *active* sins have been forbidden in the previous commandments. The Ninth and the Tenth Commandment cut more deeply into the cankerous ulcer of human corruption. Sweeping aside all questions concerning the presence or absence of *active* lust, they search out and set in the light of God's countenance the *dormant* lust, this corruption of the human heart according to which it is pregnant with sinful desires, which, though for a while they remain inactive and unnoticed, are ready to awake whenever opportunity offers. Thus it is not so much the *actual* sin of coveting which is here forbidden (for this has been prohibited in the previous commandments) as rather the *original* sin, the original corruption, according to which man is prone to give birth to covetous thoughts and desires. And all the covetous acts which are mentioned in Luther's explanation of these commandments are to be considered as but the manifestations of the corrupt condition of the human heart. Hence the catechist must, in discussing these commandments, emphasize not the outward act or the evil thoughts of the heart, but rather the corrupt condition of the heart from which evil thoughts and actions take their origin.)

Introduction. — In the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Commandments God has protected the various temporal gifts which He has bestowed upon man. He has not only forbidden us to stretch forth ungodly hands against them, but has demanded even that we should not harbor thoughts which, if put into actions, would be in conflict with their safety. In the Ninth and Tenth Commandments God does not speak for the purpose of protecting that which is without us, or which belongs to our neighbor. Here He rather turns the searching light of His divine Law upon our hearts

in order that we may learn to know the source of all evil thoughts, words, and deeds, and in order that we may seek to cleanse our hearts, and to prepare them for service pure and perfect in the sight of God. — Both commandments tell us that we should not covet what does not belong to us. We may, therefore, consider and discuss these two commandments as being one, as having the same purpose, and as being fully contained in the words,

"Thou Shalt Not Covet."

I. The Prohibition of These Commandments.

a. "Thou shalt not covet." To covet is to desire, to crave for, to want. Not every desire to have some thing is wrong, but only the evil, unlawful desire. What is meant by sinful coveting is seen from the acts by which it reveals itself, and which are described in the explanations of these commandments.

1. "We should . . . not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, nor obtain it by a show of right." Qu. 75. What the Ninth Commandment calls our "neighbor's house" is here described as his "inheritance or house." His "inheritance" is what he has inherited, or received from his parents. His "house" is everything else which he has acquired. His "inheritance and house," therefore, is everything which our neighbor owns. — This we should not "seek to get." We are not forbidden to buy it or to get it in some other lawful way. But we should not seek to get it "craftily," that is, by trickery or deceit, or in any dishonest way. Such as "craftily seek to get" their neighbor's inheritance or house, though they know that they are getting it dishonestly, endeavor to make "a show of right," that is, they try to make it appear as though they had a right to take it. — Thus Ahab obtained the vineyard of Naboth "by a show of right." Ahab wanted to have Naboth's vineyard. When Naboth refused to sell it, Jezebel, Ahab's wife, had false charges preferred against Naboth; and by the testimony of false witnesses he was convicted, and was then put to death. And since his sons were slain with him (2 Kings 9, 26) there were no heirs, and Ahab the king claimed the right to take possession of the vineyard, 1 Kings 21, 1—16. Thus it was made to appear as though Ahab had a right to take the vineyard; he obtained it "by a show of right." — So also the scribes and Pharisees prevailed upon the widows to give them what belonged to the widows by telling them that they, *viz.*, the scribes and Pharisees, were praying for them, Matt. 23, 14,

and thus made it appear as though they had a right to "devour widows' houses."

2. "We should . . . not estrange, force, or entice away from our neighbor his wife, servants, or cattle." Qu. 79. To estrange is to make them strangers to, to draw them away from, their lawful husband or masters. Thus Herod estranged Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; he caused her to leave her husband and to live with him (Matt. 14, 3. 4). — To "force" them away is to use compulsion upon them or upon their masters. Thus Saul tried to force Jonathan from David, whose sincere and upright friend he was. For when Jonathan defended David, Saul sought to kill him (1 Sam. 20, 30—33). — To "entice" them away is to try to win them away by sweet words or promises. Absalom enticed the men of Israel away from David by sweet words and by the promise that he would do their pleasure if he were king (2 Sam. 15, 1—6).

b. The things mentioned in the explanation of the Ninth and Tenth Commandments are outward acts. It is not the purpose of the Ninth and Tenth Commandments to forbid these. That has been done in the four preceding commandments. The Ninth and Tenth Commandments rather demand that the hearts should be clean before God. Why, then, are these outward acts mentioned here? Because we cannot look into the hearts themselves; we can judge of their nature only by the words and actions which flow from them. Thus, wherever such actions are found as are described in the explanations of these two commandments, it is evident that the hearts are evil. For he whose heart does not love that which is evil, but only that which is good, will certainly not do these things. These actions, therefore, show that the hearts are filled with the love of evil. This love of evil is called lust; and all lust is prohibited in the words, "Thou shalt not covet." Rom. 13, 9. — The evil lust of the heart is apparent also from the actions of such as are described Is. 5, 8: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." These at first desired to have one house, one field; but when they had acquired one, they wanted another one, and then still another. Instead of becoming more and more satisfied, they crave more and more. Their desires are so far from being satisfied that they rather grow as their possessions increase. Why is this? Because their hearts are by nature covetous, always wanting more, even though everybody else were crowded off the earth; "that they may be placed alone in the midst of

the earth." Their hearts are greedy with a greed which is never satisfied, but grows as it is fed. — A like spirit is layed open to our view in Matt. 23, 14: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer." They "devour" houses; they swallow them greedily, with hungry eyes still looking for more, as a hungry tiger swallows a morsel of bloody meat and instead of being satisfied, rather has his appetite whetted. And nothing is so sacred as to prevent them from reaching out for more. The fact that these are the houses of widows, who are deprived of their supporters, does not embarrass them. What are widows' hardships to them if only they can feed their avarice? Even the holy thing must not stand in their way, but is rather made to serve their greed; they make merchandise of prayer, asking for the widows' substance because they pray for them. — All these things are outward acts condemned in previous commandments; they are mentioned here because they show the evil condition of the human heart.

c. Nor do these commandments condemn only the active sinful lust, which actually lifts its head and leads man into the sins just mentioned. They condemn the fact that — even though by any possibility there should never be an opportunity of an evil desire springing up in man's bosom — the heart is *capable of bringing forth evil longings.* They condemn the evil tree not only because it is laden with evil fruit, but because it is an evil tree, which is evil also in mid-winter, when no evil fruit is found in it. This is seen from 1 Tim. 6, 6—10. The Apostle admonished the Christians to be content, that is, satisfied with what God has given them. For "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare"; not they that are rich, — if God gives us riches, we should receive them with thanksgiving; we should not be unthankful, — but "they that will be rich," who want riches when God would not give them wealth. "The love of money is the root of all evil"; not money, but the love of, the greed for, money. This greed is sin in itself and the root of all evil; for there is no commandment which is not violated by men because of their love of money. (Examples: First Commandment, lodge is joined for money; Second, perjury is committed for money; Third, means of grace are neglected in the chase after the dollar; Fourth, government deprived of taxes; Fifth, murder is committed; Sixth, lewd theatrical performances, books, etc.; Seventh, theft and fraud; Eighth, false testimony — all these sins are committed from the love of money.) There is danger of such

evil lust not only with the ungodly; the Apostle is here speaking to Christians. He is speaking to those who are now in the state of grace, but whom these evil lusts may "drown in perdition and destruction." He points also to the fact that some who were formerly Christians have, through such evil lusts, "erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." How is this possible? Because also the hearts of the Christians are such as may, and are able to, at any time give birth to such evil lusts. And this fact that our hearts are able to give birth to, and to harbor, evil thoughts and lusts, this fact alone, even though no evil thought should ever actually rise within us, is sin before God. Thus these two commandments *condemn not only the evil thoughts and lusts which rise from the heart, but they condemn the very fact that the heart is capable of giving birth to evil thoughts and desires.*

d. We here see the reason why God, after having forbidden all evil deeds, words, and thoughts in previous commandments, has given these two commandments, which to all intents and purposes are identical. He wanted to impress upon us the fact "that in God's sight mere evil lust is indeed and truly sin," Qu. 81; not only active evil lust, those evil longings for certain objects of which we are conscious, but "*mere* evil lust," which we do not feel or notice just now, and which is, as it were, asleep, but which may awake whenever occasion offers. While God has written this fact upon the heart of man in creation, together with the rest of the divine will, man has largely forgotten it. Therefore God repeats it in these two commandments. Rom. 7, 7. This is done for man's warning, so that he may ask God to create a clean heart within him (Ps. 51, 10). The danger is great indeed. For it is man's own lust from which temptations arise, and from which these temptations receive their power to harm, Jas. 1, 14. 15. Lust, evil, lies in the heart. This lust conceives, it rouses itself as opportunity offers; it brings forth sin, evil thoughts and acts; and these bring forth death. And since the evil in man's heart is the fountainhead of all the evil that is produced in and about man, and hence is the point of greatest danger to man's soul; and since this fact is, nevertheless, so easily forgotten, and the danger so little guarded against, God has given not only one, but two commandments for our warning.

Thus we have seen that in the Ninth and Tenth Commandments God would remind us particularly of the fact *"that in God's sight mere evil lust is indeed and truly sin."* Qu. 81.

II. The Command of These Commandments.

a. These commandments prohibit all evil lusts. However, the heart can never be vacant, empty. If what is evil does not dwell therein, that which is good must. Hence, by prohibiting evil desires, these commandments enjoin holy desires. Such injunction is expressed in the explanations of these commandments.

1. The explanation of the Ninth Commandment reads: "We should . . . help and be of service to him in keeping it," that is, his "inheritance and house." Qu. 76. Instead of "seeking to get" into our possession what is our neighbor's, we should rather be helpful to him in keeping it in his possession, and with this end in view freely and readily serve him. Gal. 5, 13. — Thus did Abraham. When the inhabitants of Sodom, together with Lot and with all the possessions of Lot and of the Sodomites, were carried off by Chedorlaomer and his allies, Abraham fought for, and brought back, all these people with their goods, and would not take payment or reward, even from the King of Sodom, beyond his actual expenses (Gen. 14).

2. The explanation of the Tenth Commandment demands that we "urge our neighbor's wife, servants, and cattle to stay and do their duty." Qu. 80. — Joseph thus urged Potiphar's wife to stay with her husband and do her duty by him when he refused to become a partner to her estrangement from her husband, but rather reminded her of the will of God (Gen. 39, 8. 9). — John the Baptist, by rebuking Herod, urged both him and Herodias that she should return to her husband and do her duty (Matt. 14, 3. 4). — And St. Paul urged Onesimus to return to his master Philemon and do his duty (Epistle to Philemon).

b. These are outward acts which have already been enjoined in the previous commandments. They are mentioned here for the purpose of showing what spirit should dwell in our hearts. The heart which prompts unto these things does not seek the advancement of one's own interests, or the satisfying of one's own desires, at the expense of one's neighbor. It rather seeks the neighbor's welfare and prosperity equally with its own. Such should be our hearts at all times. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," Phil. 2, 4. "To look on" is "to care for, to seek the interest or advantage of." Man's heart is by nature inclined to seek its own advantage, even to the loss and disadvantage of the neighbor. The Law demands a heart which looks "also on the things of others,"

which would unselfishly promote the neighbor's interests equally with its own. The Law demands that we should "serve one another," Gal. 5, 13. Yet the outward act is not sufficient; for we should not serve from compulsion or from a sense of unpleasant duty, but "by love," with a spirit which takes pleasure in the neighbor's welfare and happiness. Our hearts should be such as, being filled with love only, cannot prompt us unto anything but good and kindly deeds of love and service unto our neighbor. — Thus these two commandments require *not only acts and thoughts of love and kindness, but rather demand that our hearts should be such as cannot even harbor the desire to deal otherwise by our neighbor than to his real advantage, and true welfare and happiness.*

c. From this we learn the purpose of the command of these two commandments. After having, in previous commandments, enjoined upon us all good and holy deeds, words, and thoughts, God would here impress upon our minds the fact that He also demands that our hearts should be such as can give birth only to thoughts and desires of sincere love toward God and man. — "Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord, your God, am holy," Lev. 19, 2. God is holy, that is, He loves that which is good, and hates that which is evil. So should we also with our hearts love righteousness and hate sin. God, being holy, cannot love that which is evil, nor hate that which is good. So should our hearts also be such as can never with a single thought find pleasure in anything unholy, nor permit any displeasure at anything which is good to rise. — "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect," says our Savior, Matt. 5, 48. He has, in the preceding words, shown that the Law requires sincere love not only toward our friends, but also toward our enemies. He now draws the conclusion ("therefore") that our hearts should be as perfect in this love as God is perfect. — We should delight ourselves in the Lord, Ps. 37, 4, have pleasure in Him, have pleasure in His will, love what He loves. Then will His will be ours; and our desires will be only that wherewith He is pleased; then will we have pleasure and take delight in dealing by our neighbor as God would have us deal by Him.

Thus by the command of these two commandments God would remind us particularly of His will *"that we should have no evil lust whatever in our hearts, but only holy desires and love of God and of all that is good."* Qu. 81.

CONCLUSION. — When, in the former commandments, God showed us how we should walk before Him in thought, word, and deed, our hearts were smitten with the consciousness that we cannot stand before Him, but that we are under the sentence of eternal death because of our wickedness and perverseness. But our souls must sink even deeper into sorrow and gloom as He here uncovers unto our sight the fountain of all sin within us — our own hearts. All peace, all hope of life, would depart had not Christ stood in our stead and offered unto God also that perfect purity of heart which the Law demands of us — the holiness of His own heart, which is imputed to us through faith in His name.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

(Qu. 82—89.)

INTRODUCTION. — The words which our Catechism offers as the conclusion of all the commandments were, in the Bible, appended to the First Commandment (Ex. 20, 5. 6). But being appended to the First Commandment, they apply to all the commandments with equal force. For all commandments are comprehended in the first. "For where the heart is thus toward God, it has fulfilled this and all the other commandments. And, on the other hand, whoever fears and loves anything else in heaven and upon earth will keep neither this nor any other commandment." (*Large Catechism,* 446, 324.) Moreover, the very words of the conclusion show that its application is not to be restricted to one commandment, but is to embrace them all. For we do not read, "showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep *this* commandment," but, "that love Me and keep *My* commandments" (plural, "commandments"; "My," all My commandments). Therefore Luther properly places these words at the end of the Decalog and introduces them with the question, "What does God say of *all* these commandments?" — "Although (as we have heard above) this appendix was primarily attached to the First Commandment, it was nevertheless laid down for the sake of all the commandments, as all of them together are here referred to, and should be thereby enforced. Therefore I have said that this should be presented to, and inculcated upon, the young, that they may learn and remember it; that they may see what is to urge and move us to keep these Ten Commandments. And it is to be regarded as though this declaration were specially added to each, and inhered in and pervaded them all." (*Large Catechism,* 446, 321.)

I. "What Does God Say of All These Commandments?"

a. "I the Lord." God here calls Himself our Lord. He has created us; He has preserved and kept us to the present day; He has given unto us all that we have; and whatever gifts of body and soul we possess have been received from Him alone. We are, therefore, His handiwork. However, the Maker has a right to dispose of the work of His hands as He pleases. So God has the right to designate the purpose for which we should live, and the works which we should perform. He is our absolute and lawful Master, and we are servants who are in duty bound to obey His will. If He chooses to give us commandments, none can question His authority, and we have no choice but to obey. He, and He alone, has such authority. "There is one Lawgiver," Jas. 4, 12. — The words "I the Lord" therefore teach us that, as our Creator, God "has . . . the right to give us commandments." Qu. 84.

b. "Thy God." He does not address mankind collectively; He does not use the plural "your." He uses the singular, "thy"; He addresses each and every human being individually, thereby showing that the requirements of the Law, as well as the threats and the promises attached thereto, do not apply to mankind only as a whole and in a general way, but that they are spoken to, and binding upon, each and every one individually. — But in these words He would seek to prompt obedience on our part by reminding us of His love rather than of His power. For He says, "thy God." As our God He has blessed us in person and property, in body and soul. As our God He has kept us, and protected us, and cared for us. As our God He is even now, in the giving of His Law, solicitous only of our true temporal and eternal welfare. And having blessed us, and caring for us as a father for his children, He has a right to give us commandments in the expectation that love and confidence will prompt us to do His will. He alone has the right to expect this. For "there is one Lawgiver," James 4, 12. — The words "thy God," therefore, teach us that as our Father He "has . . . the right to give us commandments." Qu. 84.

c. "Am a jealous God."

1. The word "jealous" is sometimes used in an evil sense, meaning "suspicious" or "envious." But here it is used in a good sense, meaning "demanding exclusive devotion, love, and faithfulness." Thus a bridegroom is said to be jealous of his bride. He expects that she give a bride's love and devotion to him alone, and that she treat none else as she

treats him. He, and he alone, would be her bridegroom not only in name, but in fact. So God is jealous of us. He, and He only, would be our God in name and in fact. He demands for Himself our whole love, our whole heart. And we are to serve none other in thought, word, or deed as He has a right to expect us to serve Him. He is not indifferent; He watches lovingly, but carefully and closely, our every thought, word, and deed. And if He finds us to be faithful and true to Him in thought, word, and deed, — if we prove such faithfulness by doing His commandments, — He rejoices. To show His love and His pleasure in our faithfulness, He has promised to shower His blessings upon us as a loving bridegroom showers the evidences of his love upon his faithful bride. On the other hand, if He finds us to be unfaithful, giving such love and obedience as belong to Him alone also to others, He is grieved as a bridegroom would be to find his bride untrue. And in that case He has threatened to visit upon our heads the just deserts of our unfaithfulness.

2. God's jealousy is not to be trifled with. Man may be deceived, so that he does not become aware of unfaithfulness; but the Lord is God, whose eyes search the inmost recesses of our hearts and see what is hidden therein. Man cannot always reward faithfulness as he would; God's power to bless has no bounds. Man cannot always punish unfaithfulness as it deserves; but the Lord, being God, can punish in time and in eternity. He is the "one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." Jas. 4, 12.

Thus God says, "I the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God," *"because He has not only the right to give commandments, but also the power to execute His threats and fulfil His promises."* Qu. 84.

II. "Visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children unto the Third and Fourth Generation of Them that Hate Me."

a. "Visiting the iniquity." God visits men, comes to them, in mercy (Ex. 3, 16; 1 Sam. 2, 21; Luke 1, 68), that is, He blesses them. But He visits them also in His wrath (Ex. 32, 34), as He visited Sodom and Gomorrah. "Visiting the iniquities," therefore, is "coming to men in wrath because of their iniquities; punishing their iniquities." God thus says that He will punish iniquity; He promises punishment. To promise punishment is to threaten. Therefore Luther, in his explanation of these words, says, "God threatens to punish." He threatens to punish iniquity. What is meant

by iniquity is seen from the words of the explanation, "God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments." Iniquity is the transgression, the breaking, of the commandments. — And His anger is severe. Deut. 27, 26 He says through Moses: "Cursed be every one that confirmeth not all the words of the Law to do them." To confirm the words of the Law is to set them up before one's eyes as applying to one's self, as the rule according to which one knows himself to be in duty bound to order his life. The curse without limitation is pronounced upon every one who does not set up all the words of the commandments as a Law for himself from which he does not depart. And again we read: "The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6, 23. Sin is a master; and whoever serves this master will receive his wages. But the only wages which sin pays is death, temporal death and eternal death. And when such wages are meted out, God is present to see that the wages are paid in full, and that none may be able to refuse to accept payment. *God* visits iniquity.

Thus, by the words "visiting iniquity," God threatens *"His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation."* Qu. 85.

b. "(Visiting the iniquity) of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me." Here God tells us whom He would punish. He would visit iniquity upon them that hate Him. The heart which loves God as it should does not sin. Where there is sin, therefore, there is not full true love toward God. Lack of love, however, is in the Bible called hatred. Hence, the cause of all sin is hatred of God; and all sin is but the outward manifestation of hatred, or hatred expressed in actions. Therefore, Luther properly says that in these words: "God threatens to punish *all that transgress these commandments."* (*Large Catechism,* 392, 38.) This is stated also in the Bible-passage: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. 18, 20. — But our Catechism says more than this. We read: "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." Are, then, children punished for the sins of the fathers? In answering this question, a distinction must be made between temporal and eternal punishments. — Eternal damnation comes only upon those who have sinned, and who have walked in impenitence until death. In eternity none shall suffer in the least, nor in any way be tormented or annoyed, because of any sin which another has committed. Here applies the full meaning of the words of Ezekiel: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the

son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." — As for temporal punishments, it is a truth which not only the Word of God teaches, but which we see illustrated in every-day life, that children must often suffer because of the sins of the fathers. Thus Canaan, the son of Ham, and all his descendants must bear the consequences of Ham's evil deed, Gen. 9, 25; and the Jews must to the present day be strangers and be despised and persecuted in all the earth because of the curse which their fathers have provoked, Matt. 27, 25. And even godly children must often suffer because of the evil deeds of their fathers. Thus Jonathan lost the throne because his father Saul was ungodly (1 Sam. 15, 26—28). It is a common thing that children must suffer shame and want because their fathers have committed crimes, and that the children's health of body and mind is destroyed by the sins of immorality of the fathers. (Even unbelieving medical men have these words, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," upon their lips constantly when referring to the fact that sicknesses contracted by immorality often make the lives of children and children's children literally to the third and fourth generation a stream of misery, causing bodily and mental decay.) — Would God, then, punish children for the sins which they themselves have not committed? God is not unjust; but He seeks the salvation of the children. Ungodly children should see the curse and bitterness of sin in the sufferings which their fathers' sins have brought even upon them; they should be filled with terror and repent. Their sufferings are God's voice, saying: "Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 18, 31.) And if they heed this warning and loving, though earnest and emphatic, call of God, their earthly sufferings will result in eternal bliss — truly, a blessed exchange! On the other hand, if they will not hear God's warning voice as it calls unto them through their sufferings, they are adding to their guilt; and the blows which the anger of God fells upon them will become more and more severe, until finally the whirlwind of God's wrath will sweep them away and destroy them utterly. Thus "no idolatrous royal family in Israel continued beyond the third and fourth generation" (Menken, in Daechsel's *Bibelwerk,* Ezek. 20, 5). — And if *godly* children must suffer on account of the sins of their fathers, with them also God's ways are ways of love. Being made to feel the bitterness of the curse of

sin in this life, they should the more beware lest they walk in the footsteps of their parents' ungodliness, shun the lusts of the flesh, and cling to Him who will, in due time heal all their diseases and dry all their tears. To them such suffering is not punishment, but rather the chastisement of a loving Father's hand for their souls' eternal welfare.

Thus we have seen that God will visit "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," that is, actually punish sins, *"upon such as likewise hate Him and follow their parents in their transgressions."* Qu. 86.

c. God here warns us of the wrath which is provoked by sin. Moreover, He sets before our very eyes the examples of such as have even in this life been made to feel the fearful wrath of God. We read in the Bible, and hear in every-day life, of the fearful judgments of the wrath of God upon the ungodly. We read of, and see before our very eyes in the children of Canaan, the evidences of the wrath of God at the sin of Ham, Gen. 9, 25. We see in the Jews of our days the consequences of the sins of those who sought the death of Christ, Matt. 27, 25. We know that the sins of the first world brought about its destruction in the Flood, Gen. 7. We know of the fire from heaven which destroyed not only the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but consumed also the very ground upon which they were built, Gen. 19. We know of the terribly precise fulfilment of every word of prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, Luke 19, 43. 44. We see daily the sufferings which the sins of the fathers bring upon their children. — If we ask, Why has God made known to us His threat to visit "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate" Him? and why has He set before us the examples of His wrath and punishment? the answer is evident: *"That we may fear His wrath, and not act contrary to His commandments."* Qu. 87.

III. "And Showing Mercy unto Thousands of Them that Love Me and Keep My Commandments."

a. "Showing mercy." As God threatens to visit iniquity, so He tells us that He will do good to those who keep His commandments. He "promises . . . every blessing." However, His kindness is not as His wrath. When God punishes, the evil which befalls man is only what he has deserved. But the good which God sends, even when it is sent to those who keep His commandments, is not what man deserves. For

God is our absolute Lord and Master, and may demand obedience without being under obligations to reward it. If He nevertheless promises us blessings, it is because of His great love. Therefore He says, "showing mercy." Mercy is another word for pity. He pities us. He sees that we can possess, enjoy, prosper in, nothing unless He gives and preserves it to us. He sees that without Him we cannot be happy in time or in eternity. This fact moves Him to pity. And while He owes us nothing, He freely and lovingly gives blessings to those who love Him and keep His commandments. Therefore, the explanation of our Catechism says, "He promises *grace* and every blessing." Grace is love, or the gifts of love. The word grace shuts out every thought of right or title on our part to His gifts. — He promises "grace and *every blessing.*" He promises blessings in eternity. He says, "This do, and thou shalt live," Luke 10, 28, live forever in heaven. But not in eternity only would He bless obedience, but here upon earth also. "Godliness," that is, the keeping of His commandments, "is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. 4, 8. Even in this life would God give everything that can make truly happy and blessed to such as love Him and keep His commandments.

Thus in the words "showing mercy" God promises *"grace and every blessing."* Qu. 88.

b. He would show mercy "unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments." They who keep His commandments are here described as such as "love Him." Disobedience, as we have seen, is caused by lack of love, by hatred in the heart. Obedience also is not an outward act only, but is the result of the proper attitude of the heart. For such as keep the commandments outwardly only do not keep them at all in the sight of God. True obedience begins in the heart. Its beginning is the love of God. And the outward act is only the fruit, the outward manifestation, of the love of God in the heart. — Such love and obedience God would bless in those who walk therein. But so great is His mercy that He would give "grace and every blessing" not only to those who themselves walk in the way of His commandments. He says, "Showing mercy unto *thousands of them.*" His mercy will continue until the obedient have grown into thousands, that is, until their children and children's children are numbered by the thousands, or for many generations. — Does, then, God not punish the sins of the children if the parents have been obedient? We must again distinguish between temporal and eternal rewards. Eternal blessings are

given to none but the children of God. He who hardens himself in sin will in no wise escape because his parents have been godly and obedient. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," Ezek. 18, 20. — But temporal blessings are often bestowed upon children and children's children because of the piety of the parents. By continuing His kindness even after the death of the godly parents, God would impress upon the minds of the children how great and blessed a thing it is to walk in the ways of the Lord, in order that, forsaking sin, they should walk in the footsteps of their godly parents. The goodness which God shows unto the children because of the piety of the parents is God's call to them to make Him alone their Lord and Master.

Thus God *"promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments."*

c. God sets forth these promises before us. Moreover, He has shown us examples of such as have been prospered because they themselves gave ear unto His commands. Thus we hear of Abraham (Gen. 13, 6), Isaac (Gen. 26, 13. 14), Joseph (Gen. 41, 38—44), and Daniel (Dan. 1), etc., whose faithful obedience God has blessed abundantly in this life. We find also such as have been blessed because of the godliness of their fathers. Thus, stiff-necked and hard-hearted Israel was blessed for Abraham's sake; and even ungodly kings of Judah were prospered for the sake of David. And if at times it would appear otherwise, and the godly or their children must suffer greatly, this is because in those particular cases God finds a heavy cross a greater blessing than earthly prosperity; even that suffering is a special blessing from the Lord. And if those who, though godly, must suffer greatly are but faithful under the cross, a doubly great reward of grace shall be given them in heaven (Matt. 5, 12). — The promise of God has been given, and these examples of its fulfilment have been set before our eyes, in order that we might behold the love which God bears us, and that we should thereby be prompted to love Him also. "Therefore we should also love . . . Him." — The knowledge of His love should, furthermore, encourage us to "trust in Him," firmly believing that His love will prompt Him to bless and to support us always. And loving, and trusting in, Him, we should without compulsion, and without feeling obedience to be a burden, "willingly do according to His commandments."

Thus, God's promise invites us *"that we may love God and trust in Him, and willingly do according to His commandments."* Qu. 89.

And the entire Conclusion of the Commandments is given *that "we should fear His wrath, and not act contrary to" His commandments, but rather "love and trust in Him, and willingly do according to His commandments."*

Conclusion. — As we behold both the wrath of God over sin and His loving-kindness to all who walk in His ways, our souls may well be filled with longing for strength daily to grow in obedience to His Law. Such strength, however, cannot be gained by self-chosen works or human efforts. Not even the holy Law of God can bestow it. He only can rise with strength to walk even weakly in the commandments of God who has first beheld Him who washed us from our sin and made us the children of God. Therefore, if we would find strength to do the works of the Law, let us hasten to the Cross.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW.

(Qu. 90. 91.)

Introduction. — We have now learned to know the holy will of God. We have learned to know it from the Ten Commandments. We have seen what God would have us do or not do, and how God would have us be. We have, furthermore, seen what God promises to those who keep His Law, and wherewith He threatens such as fail to keep it. — The question now presents itself: For what purpose has God given the Law? This question we shall now discuss.

I. The Purpose for Which the Law was Given Originally.

a. After the rich young man had, at Christ's direction, named the requirements of the Law, Jesus told Him, "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10, 28). Jesus would say: If you keep the commandments, you will by such obedience to the Ten Commandments obtain life, eternal life, eternal salvation. He thereby promises unto all who truly and fully comply with the demands of the Law eternal salvation as a reward of their obedience. And since Christ cannot lie or deceive, it is evident that, by the keeping of the Law, man shall gain right and title to the bliss of heaven. This was the purpose for which God gave the Law to man — wrote it upon man's heart — in the creation, *viz.*, that by its fulfilment man should be saved.

b. But can man still be saved by the keeping of the Law? If man could keep the Law as it should be kept, he certainly might still be saved thereby. For the words of Christ, "This do, and thou shalt live," are as true now as they were when

they were first spoken. But in order to fulfil the Law, man must keep it not only outwardly, but, as we have seen, he must obey its commands also in all his thoughts and words. — The Pharisees in the days of Christ believed that they could thus fulfil the Law. And there are many to-day who believe that they can and do fulfil it. But what does the Bible say? The Word of God denies man's ability to fulfil the Law; and it denies it with regard to mankind in general, as well as also more particularly even with regard to the children of God.

1. Of *mankind in general* it is said that they cannot fulfil the Law. Ps. 14, 3 we are told what the Lord found when He "looked down from heaven upon the children of men" (v. 2). "They are *all* gone aside" from the way of the Law, they all have sinned; "they are *all together* become filthy" with the decay of sin, corrupt to the very core; "there is *none* that doeth good, no, not one." Let us mark well that the Psalmist does not say: There is none that *does not sin,* but: "There is none that *doeth good.*" Not a single work of a single man is good. — The same truth is stated in Eccl. 7, 20: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." Here we have the twofold statement with regard to all men: "*None* doeth good," and: "There is none that sinneth not." Again, Isaiah, speaking of himself and of his whole people, says: "We are *all* as an unclean thing," polluted with the uncleanness of sin, "and all our righteousnesses," that is, our *good* works, the results of our best endeavors, "are as filthy rags," reeking with the filth of our sins, Is. 64, 6. And Job, speaking of "man that is born of woman" (v. 1), that is, all men without exception, says: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one," Job 14, 4. Man that is born of woman is unclean by nature. And being unclean, he cannot bring forth anything that is clean, cannot do a single work which is good and pure before God. For God demands not only works which have the form and appearance of being in accordance with the Law; He demands works which come forth from a heart that is perfect in the fear and love of God, and in the trust put in Him. But man's heart is not thus clean before God. Hence man's works cannot be such as He demands. This is true of every man; it is true of all who are born of woman. It has been true ever since the fall of man. And since none were born before the fall, it is true of all men. — Thus the Bible teaches that *"since the fall natural man cannot keep the Law of God at all."* Qu. 90.

2. But among men we find a small number who differ

from the rest. For they have been born again, they have been regenerated. They have received faith; and through faith they have begun to fear, love, and trust in, God. Hence, they can perform works from the fear, love, and confidence of God. Are not these able to fulfil the Law? The Bible tells us that also the children of God are unable to fulfil the Law as they should. St. Paul was a child of God, an apostle of the Lord, a holy man of God. But he says: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." Like a participant in an athletic contest, he is striving for the prize. That prize is perfection. He follows after it; he seeks to apprehend it, the more so since he has been apprehended — laid hold upon — by Christ Jesus for the purpose of attaining perfection. But while he is in this body, he must confess that he has not attained it, that he is not yet perfect, Phil. 3, 12. Likewise, the Psalmist, Ps. 143, 2, calls himself a servant of God, a child of God, a Christian. But even though a Christian, he is not perfect. He implores God not to enter into judgment with him; for he cannot be justified — declared righteous — before God. And this is not the case with him only, but with every child of God as well; "for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." — We find, then, that the Bible teaches that *"even the regenerate can keep" the Law "but imperfectly."* (*Ev. Luth. Hymn Book,* 325, 2.)

3. Since, then, no man — not even the regenerate — can fulfil the Law, it is evident that no man can be saved by the keeping of the Law. For he who would be saved by the Law must keep it perfectly. For "whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," Jas. 2, 10. The whole Law is the will of God, and the fulfilment of the whole Law demands perfect love of God. He who offends in one point shows that he does not love God as he should. He thereby violates the very foundation of the Law as a whole and of every individual commandment, *viz.,* the love of God. — Therefore, while the Law was originally given for the purpose that by its fulfilment man might enter heaven, since the Fall man's sinfulness renders the accomplishment of this purpose impossible.

"Therefore, by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh living be justified in His sight." (Rom. 3, 21.)

II. The Purposes Which the Law Should Serve Now.

Though man had sinned and thereby rendered impossible the achieving of the original purpose of the Law, *viz.,* man's salvation by means of the Law, God nevertheless repeated

the Law, even after man had become sinful, giving it through Moses upon two tables of stone upon Mount Sinai, showing thereby that the Law was still to serve a purpose upon earth according to the will of God. Such is indeed the case. And the purpose which the Law is to serve now is threefold, *viz.*: —

a. The Law is to serve as a *curb*.

1. A curb is a bit, used on a bridle and arranged with a strap or chain to be passed under the horse's jaw in such a way as to make the bit doubly powerful. A curb of this kind is not used on good and gentle horses. These will do their master's will as soon as they know it, and hence they can be guided by means of an ordinary mild bit. But a curb is used on horses which are wild and unruly, and which can be controlled only by means of force, even harsh force. And even a curb is not always sufficient to keep a wild and unruly horse in the ways of safety.

2. The Law is said to be a curb. It is to be useful in controlling men. No curb is needed to guide such as love God. They will try to do the will of the Lord from the love of God. But there are many people in this world who do not love God, and who do not care whether they do the will of God or not. They are evil; and being evil, they would rather do what is contrary to the will of God whenever this seems to favor their plans or to suit their convenience than walk in His ways. If there were nothing to hold them in check, to curb them, they would walk in all kinds of gross sins openly and without reserve. Murder, robbery, indecency, and all manner of crime would soon fill the whole world, so that there would be no safety upon earth, and the Christian's lot would be unbearable. Therefore, since the ungodly will not let the love of God rule them, God would keep them in check by the fear of His wrath. For this reason He has given them His Law. They still know the will of God to some extent from the Law written upon their hearts. And though they have darkened this Law by their sins, it is still clear enough to keep them aware of the wrong of the gross outward sins. Their conscience also bears them witness that God will hold them accountable for their deeds, that God will punish them in time by means of sickness, poverty, disgrace, and shame before men, imprisonment, and even death, and that after death He will punish them in hellfire eternally. And thus, while they do not abstain from gross sins because of the love of God, the fear of punishment will hold them in check. Of course, it happens that men will

harden themselves even against the fear of punishment, and nevertheless commit crimes. The coarse outbursts of sin are checked only "in a measure." But they are not by far as numerous as they would be without the restraint of the Law.

3. In serving as a curb, the Law does not make the ungodly better than they would be without its restraint. Their evil nature is thereby changed as little as a vicious dog is made gentle by being tied with a chain. When a vicious dog is tied, it is likely to become even more vicious. This measure, therefore, is not taken for the improvement of the dog, but for the safety of the public. So also, when the wicked is curbed by the Law, he does not become better thereby; he may, on the contrary, curse God and man because he cannot live in crime and shame as he pleases. But God curbs him by the Law for the sake of his fellow-men, especially for the sake of the Christians, in order that they may "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

Thus the Law serves as a curb *for the wicked,* inasmuch as *"it checks, in a measure, the coarse outbursts of sin, and thereby helps to maintain outward discipline and decency in the world."* Qu. 91.

b. The Law is to serve as a *mirror.*

1. A mirror is useful and necessary inasmuch as it shows us our own appearance. We use it whenever we would know whether we are clean and orderly, or whether our appearance is such that we must be ashamed of it before others. — The Law is called a mirror because it also teaches us to know ourselves. It tells us whether we are clean, or whether our appearance is such that it must bring shame upon us. But it does not teach us to know our outward appearance or our appearance before men. It tells us whether we are clean before God, or whether our appearance before God is such that we must be ashamed of it. (Illustrate this by showing how the First Commandment shows us whether we are idolaters; the Second, whether we are profaners of the name of God, etc.)

2. If we thus use the Law as a mirror, it shows us innumerable blotches and sores of sin, not only outwardly, but even deep down in our hearts. It shows us that we have not only "sinned against God by thought, word, and deed," but that we are also "by nature sinful and unclean." In other words, it teaches us to know our sins. Therefore St. Paul says: "By the Law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. 3, 20. This is precisely what the Law should do. God has given it for this purpose. For without it we would

never come to the knowledge of our sins. "I had not known sin but by the Law." Rom. 7, 7. And especially the written Law is to teach us to know our sins. True, also the remnant of the Law in our hearts teaches us to know outward acts to be sin. But the corruption of the hearts would not appear as so great an evil without the Law. "I had not known lust except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet," Rom. 7, 7.

3. This use of the Law is a very important one. For unless man knows that he is a sinner, he will not and cannot believe that Christ has saved him from his sins. But now God wants all men to be saved. And therefore He has given the Law unto fallen mankind in order that all men, using it as a mirror, might therein behold their sins, and then by faith seek forgiveness, life, and salvation with Christ.

Thus the Law serves as a mirror *for all men,* inasmuch as *"it teaches man the due knowledge of his sins."* Qu. 91.

c. The Law is to serve, finally, as a *rule.*

1. A rule is a statement, or formula, which is to direct and guide us in our actions. The Law is a rule because it teaches man what he should do or leave undone in order to please God.

2. The Law cannot serve as a rule for the ungodly. For, as we have seen, the ungodly cannot fulfil the Law of God at all. Though he may have and know the commandments, and though he may try with all his strength to do the will of God, all his acts are sin before God. This is the case because there is no real love and fear, but, at best, only slavish terror, of the true God in his heart. Hence, the Law may be a curb to him, through the fear of punishment, which causes him to abstain from outward shame and crime. But it can never be a rule to him according to which he strives to order his life from the sincere love of his God.

3. But he who has been born again, that is, to come to faith, has received forgiveness of his sins, and knows that he need no longer fear the curse of the Law. Being freed from the curse and from the fear of punishment, he loves the God who in Christ has given him life and salvation. And beholding the mercy of God and remembering His loving-kindness, the Christian will want to avoid what displeases the God of his salvation, and rather do those things which please Him. Therefore, the child of God will ask, "What is it that displeases my God? For that I want to avoid. What must I do that I may rather please Him, that I may show how dearly I love Him, how sincerely I appreciate His salvation?" No man can answer this question from his own

knowledge; for none can read the mind of God. God's own revelation alone can supply the information. Such revelation of the mind of God is found in the Law. It tells man: If you would please God, fear, love, and trust in Him, do not take His name in vain, sanctify the holy day, etc. And the child of God will freely, from the love of God, govern his life according to these precepts of the Law, thus using the Law as a rule. — Such use of the Law as a rule is indicated in Ps. 119, 9. The Psalmist inquires wherewith a young man may cleanse his way, make it clean, pure, pleasing before God. And he himself supplies the answer, "By taking heed thereto," that is, governing it, "according to Thy word," Thy Law. He who does what the commandments teach him knows that his way is clean before God, that his works please God. Works of this kind are called good works.

Hence, the Law is to serve as a rule *to the Christian* inasmuch as it leads him to know "what are truly good works." Qu. 91.

We have thus heard of the threefold use which the Law is to serve after the fall of man, *viz.,* that of a curb, a mirror, and a rule.

Conclusion. — We Christians should daily strive for greater proficiency in the use of the Law according to its threefold application. — We should use it as a curb. For though a new man is born within us, the old sinful man, who does not love and fear God, but rather desires to walk in sin, still daily tries to raise his head. And this unbelieving and rebellious man within us should be held in check by the contemplation of the curse of God upon all ungodliness. — The new man, on the other hand, who delights in the ways of righteousness, should daily be instructed from the Law as to the works wherewith he may please and glorify God. — But most of all should we diligently use the Law as a mirror, daily anew contemplating our sinfulness before God. For only as long as we remember that we are sinners, shall we cling unto Christ. As soon as we forget to remember our sinfulness, we shall of necessity forget the Savior from sin. From this may God keep and preserve us!

SIN.

(Qu. 92—97.)

Introduction. — In discussing the threefold use of the Law, we have seen that the principal, most important, and most necessary purpose for which God has given unto us His Law is that we should use it as a mirror. By the study of

the Law we should come to the knowledge of our sin, and of the evil which we have thereby deserved. While we know, in a general way, what sin is, and while we have used the word repeatedly, it will be profitable unto a fuller and deeper understanding if we devote a special lesson to the discussion of the nature and origin of sin.

I. What Is Sin?

This question is briefly, but fully, answered in 1 John 3, 4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the Law; for sin is the transgression of the Law."

a. These words show, in the first place, that the question whether an act is sin or not can be determined only by comparing it with the Law. In the Law God has made known unto us His entire holy will. Whatever, therefore, is not in violation of the Law is not contrary to the holy will of God. And whatever conflicts with the Law is also in conflict with the holy will of God. And whatever is contrary to the holy will of God is sin; for "sin is the transgression of the Law." And no man or body of men can change the fact of the sinfulness of anything which conflicts with the Law. Though the whole world with one accord should assert that it is right, it is still in conflict with the Law, hence sin. On the other hand, nothing is sin unless it is in conflict with the Law of God. And though the whole world should unite in condemning it, the fact remains that it is not in violation of the Law of God; and hence it is not sin; for the transgression of the Law alone is sin.

Thus, *"sin is a departure from the rule of the divine Law."* Qu. 92.

b. The words, "Sin is the transgression of the Law," show furthermore that *every* transgression of the Law is sin. Every thought, word, deed, or condition of the heart which is not in accord with the Law of God is sin, whether we are conscious of such violation or not, and whether it is committed from weakness or from malice, intentionally or unintentionally, whether it consists in doing what the Law forbids or in failing to do what the Law enjoins. *Whatever* is a transgression of the Law is sin.

Hence, *"sin is* EVERY *departure from the rule of the divine Law."* Qu. 92.

II. By Whom Was Sin Brought into the World? Qu. 93.

(NOTE. — Dietrich, in his exposition of Luther's Small Catechism, asks at this place, "What is the cause of sin?" Schwan has evidently improved upon the question by asking, "By whom

was sin brought into the world?" Attention is here called to the fact that Schwan is not inquiring with regard to the original authorship of sin. He merely seeks to fix the responsibility for its introduction among the human race. The fact that the devil was the first to sin is indeed touched upon in the answer in an explanatory relative clause, but its full discussion is reserved for Question 115. The fact here to be emphasized is this that sin entered the human race because these two, the devil and man, collaborated, each of them doing what could be done by him to bring about this result: Satan tempted, and man consented. Irrespective of whatever interpretation may be placed upon this question in the German original, its form in the English translation does not admit of any other explanation. Besides, Bible usage in both languages approves of this interpretation. "Sin entered into the world," Rom. 5, 12, means, "sin entered the human race." — However, if the catechist elects to dwell upon the question in the full scope in which Dietrich has it, *viz.*, "What is the cause of sin?" the mode of treatment here offered admits of adaptation.)

The answer for this question is found in the history of the Fall, Gen. 3, 1—7. There we are told how sin entered into the world.

a. We are told that the serpent tempted man. The serpent was the instrument of the devil. Thus it was the devil who tempted man. — The devil had originally been created an angel of light, righteous and holy. But he had sinned against God. When this occurred, or what was the nature of the first sin, we do not know. But we do know that the devil sinned before man. For the Bible expressly says: "The devil sinneth from the beginning," 1 John 3, 8. He has been the first to sin; and whosoever among men now yields himself to the service of sin thereby but takes up the work, walks in the spirit, of the devil. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." But having himself departed from God, the devil sought to corrupt with the same poison also the visible rational creatures of God. He tempted man, sought to lead him into sin. And hence the fact that man sinned, that sin entered into the world, has its first cause in the devil.

Thus sin was brought into the world *"by the devil, who first departed from God."* Qu. 93.

b. Man yielded to the temptations of the devil. Man could have resisted; for he was, at that time, not weak, as we are now, even though we are children of God. Man was perfect and holy, endued with all the spiritual strength necessary to withstand temptation. But though able to resist, man yielded. It was his own choice, an act of his own free

will, whereby he became subject to sin, and whereby the power of sin was fastened upon the whole human race. Rom. 5, 12: "By one man sin entered into the world." —

Hence, sin was brought into the world *"by man, who of his own free will suffered himself to be misled into sin."* Qu. 93.

These two, then, have brought sin into the world, *viz., "the devil . . . and man. . . ."* Qu. 93.

III. Of How Many Kinds Is Sin? Qu. 94.

Sin is of two kinds, original sin and actual sin.

a. Let us speak briefly of the *general difference* between original and actual sin. The word "original" is derived from the word "origin." Origin means the beginning. Original sin, therefore, is sin which we have from the beginning, from the moment we enter into life. Hence it is a sin which was found in us before we could perform a single act or think a single thought. Therefore original sin is not what we do, but *what we are.* In this it differs from actual sin. The word "actual" is derived from "act." Actual sin is the sin which we commit with our acts, whether they be outward deeds, or words, or thoughts and desires of the heart. Actual sin, therefore, is not what we are, but *what we do* in thought, word, or deed.

b. Original sin does not consist in what we do, but in what we are.

1. We have already heard that all men are sinners by nature, that none can bring forth any clean thing, do any perfectly righteous work, because all are unclean. This was not always the case. When God had first created the world, — and this included man, — "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." (Gen. 1, 31.) The eye of God when it examined man, found him very good. Even the searching eye of God could find no imperfection in man. In the sight of God man was very good. Man knew God, knew Him fully, as fully as a creature can know the Creator. And man loved God, delighted himself in God. Man knew also the will of God; and man loved the will of God and walked in the way of the commandments of God — not by compulsion, but because he rejoiced in the will of God. He thus had *righteousness,* perfect righteousness before God. And man had not reached this state of perfection after years of instruction, training, and effort. He was created holy and righteous. And because this righteousness was created in man and with man, it is called "concreated" righteous-

ness; for concreated is that which was "created with" man. — But now it is different. He no longer knows God, nor does he know God's will perfectly, by nature. And he does not love the will of God, nor does he rejoice to do what is good before God because it is God's will. St. Paul says: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," Rom. 7, 8. Man has lost the concreated righteousness, he is deprived of his concreated righteousness.

This, then, belongs to the nature of original sin, that *"our whole human nature . . . is now deprived of its concreated righteousness."* Qu. 95.

Neither must we imagine that, though we have indeed lost the righteousness in which man was originally created and are no longer perfect, there still is something in us which has escaped the depraving influence of sin, and which is good in us by nature. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth *no* good thing," Rom. 7, 8. Nothing within us is good; everything is evil. This applies, of course, not, strictly speaking, to the powers of the body, but rather to the powers of the soul. We cannot know God, we cannot love Him, we know neither His holy will nor His grace, and we can love neither the one nor the other as we are by nature. We are evil, only evil, evil in every respect, and good in no way, before God. Our nature is depraved, totally depraved, depraved in its entirety.

Hence, original sin is, and consists in, *"the total depravity of our whole human nature, which is now deprived of its concreated righteousness."* Qu. 95.

2. Original sin is the depravity of the soul, of the heart. We cannot see the soul; we cannot look into the heart. Therefore we cannot see this depravity of the soul; we cannot see original sin, not even our own, as little as we can see a sickness. But we can perceive the presence of sickness by its effects; so can we also perceive the presence of original sin by the effect which it produces in man. Gen. 8, 21 we read: "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." What man imagines, what he thinks, the thoughts which govern his actions — all this is evil. And it does not become evil as a result of man's associations; it is evil from his youth. If a child is left to think and do as it pleases, it will invariably turn to that which is evil. Of course, the thoughts and actions are not original, but actual sin. But they show what kind of heart is in man's bosom. It is a heart which gives birth to evil thoughts, to evil desires. And the fact that man's heart is such as will ever bring forth evil thoughts and desires constitutes original

sin. This original sin is present always from our first entrance into life. Even before man is able to think a single thought, it is there; and as soon as man can think, it becomes evident that it is there. For the thoughts which the heart then brings forth are evil thoughts. And the evil thoughts and imaginations which arise are the evidences of the depravity of the heart, or of original sin.

Thus we have seen that original sin is *"the total depravity of our whole human nature, which now is deprived of its concreated righteousness, and is inclined toward all that is evil."* Qu. 95.

3. The name "original sin" teaches us how original sin has come upon us. We have it from our origin, from our very first beginnings. We did not acquire it after we were born; we were born with it. The Bible teaches this very clearly. When David had fallen into great sins, and, repenting, examined himself in order to ascertain how he could commit such great sins and crime, he confessed: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," Ps. 51, 5. Sin, original sin, corrupted him even while he was shapen, while he came into existence, and while he was being conceived. And Christ tells us why it is that all human beings are so sinful that they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven without being born again. He says: "That which is born of flesh is flesh," John 3, 6. "Flesh" here means sinful human beings, human beings corrupted by original sin. All who are born of sinful parents are themselves sinful; they are flesh. They have received their sinful corruption at their birth; they have inherited original sin from their parents, these again from theirs. Thus this sin has come down to us from Adam.

Hence, original sin *"is that sin which we have inherited from Adam."* Qu. 95.

4. Original sin is truly sin, that is, it is contrary to the will of God, and therefore brings upon man the punishment of God. St. Paul tells us, Eph. 2, 3, that we "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." We Christians and all others, all men, are by nature children of wrath, under the wrath of God. God is angry with us. His punishment must come upon us. And we have not become children of wrath by our evil deeds or evil thoughts. No, we were by nature, from our birth, the children of wrath. If, then, our sinful acts may be excluded, and we be still under the wrath of God, original sin alone can be the cause of the wrath of God which hovered over us at our birth. Hence, original sin is truly sin and makes us *"subject to damnation."* Qu. 67.

We have now learned that original sin *"is that sin which we have inherited from Adam, the total depravity of our whole human nature, which is now deprived of its concreated righteousness, inclined toward all that is evil, and subject to damnation."* Qu. 95.

c. Actual sin does not consist in what we are, but in what we do.

1. The acts which constitute actual sin are all acts which are not in accord with the Word of God. It is evident, therefore, that such acts as murder, theft, adultery, false witness, cursing, etc., are sin. But the Law of God judges not only the deeds of the hands and of the lips, but those of the heart as well. Thus Christ says: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," Matt. 15, 19. Hence, every evil thought, no matter how secretly it may be hidden, every evil desire rising in the heart, though it be so slight that we ourselves scarcely realize it and perhaps do not remember it, is an actual sin.

2. But not only those things which we actually do by a definite act of commission are actual sins. God would not only have us avoid evil deeds; He would have us perform every good work. And if we fail to do this, such act of negligence also is an actual sin; it is a sin of omission. That sins of omission are truly sins is seen from the words of St. James: "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," Jas. 4, 17.

Hence, actual sin is *"every transgression of the divine Law in desires, thoughts, words, and deeds."* Qu. 96.

Conclusion. — We have now discussed the Law of God. We have heard its demands, its promises, and its threats. We have also heard that the chief and most important purpose for which the Law has been given is that it should be a mirror unto us, wherein we might behold our own appearance before the tribunal of our God.

If we have made the proper use of the Law as a mirror, we have realized that we fall short of its demands, yea, that there is nothing in us but only sin, original sin and actual sin. Therefore, the promises of the Law cannot cheer us, but its threats must strike terror into our hearts. And thereby the chief purpose of the Law has been accomplished in us. For we must realize that, if there is salvation for us, it is most assuredly *"not by the works of the Law."* Qu. 27.

But after we have realized this truth, our God does not

leave us to despair. The Law indeed cannot offer us anything more. But now comes the Gospel. It tells us of Him who is the "end of the Law" for us, inasmuch as He has stood in our stead, and fulfilled the Law for us, and borne all punishment which should have been meted out to us. Accepting Him when the Law demands, we may point to Christ, saying: "All this has been done; Christ has done it for me." When the Law threatens punishment, we may again point to Christ, saying: "All this has been endured; Christ has been punished for me." — Such is the firm security of him who trusts in Christ. Let us by faith make Him *our* Christ. For "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10, 4.

Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Let Thy bright beams arise;
Dispel the sorrow from our minds,
The darkness from our eyes.

Convince us of our sin;
Then lead to Jesus' blood,
And to our wondering view reveal
The mercies of our God.

'Tis Thine to cleanse the heart,
To sanctify the soul,
To pour fresh life on every part,
And new-create the whole.

Dwell, therefore, in our hearts;
Our minds from bondage free;
Then shall we know, and praise, and love,
The Father, Son, and Thee.

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